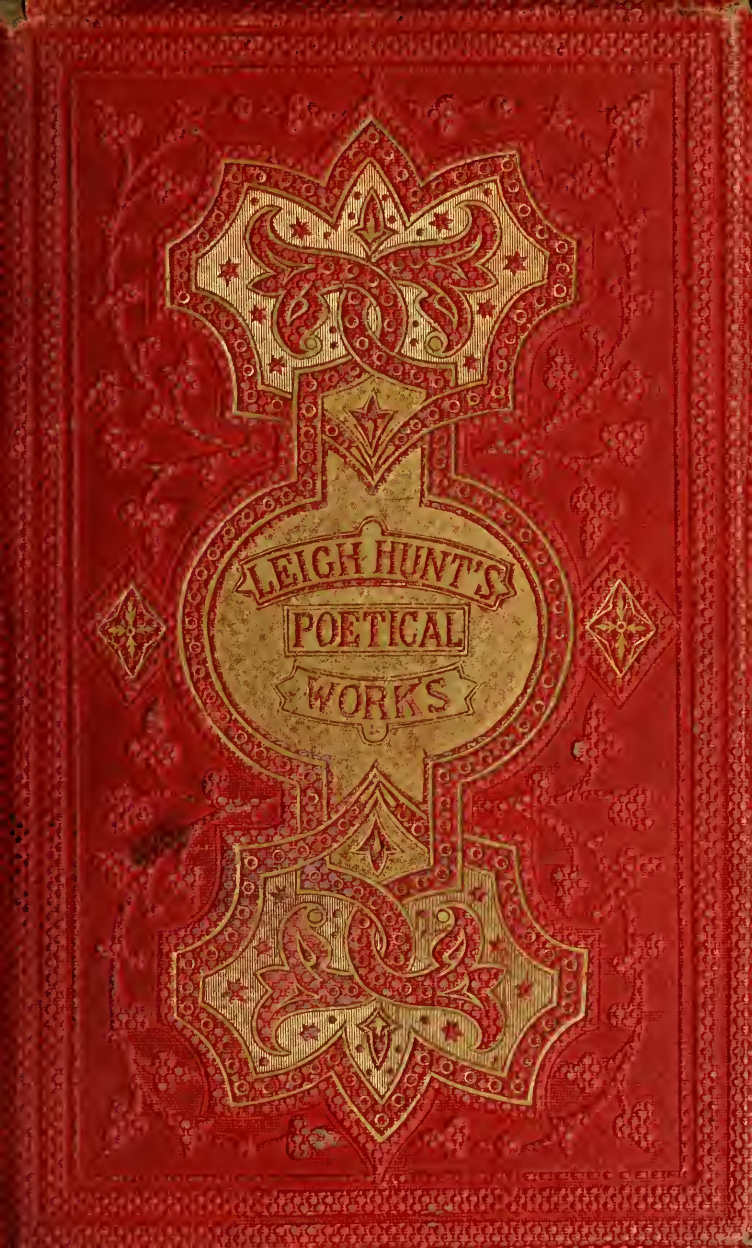
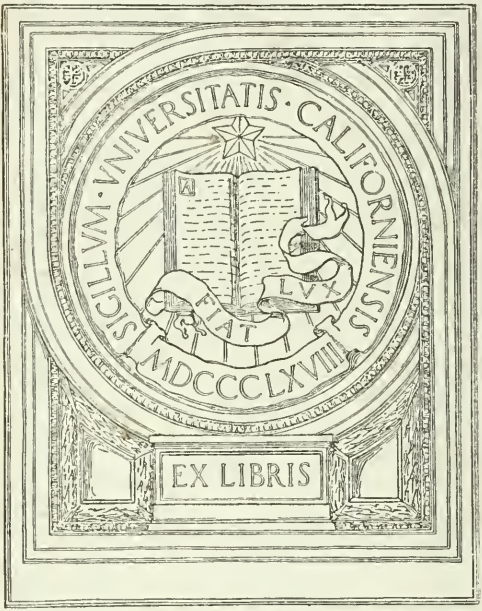

LEIGH HUNT'S
POETICAL
WORKS

C. GRUNHOLZER.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



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ROUTLEDGE'S BRITISH POETS.

The Poetical Works

OF

LEIGH HUNT.

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"'Tis Sidney's sister—"

FRONT. The Shewe of Fayre Seeming P. 188

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

LEIGH HUNT.

LONDON AND NEW YORK:
ROUTLEDGE, WARNE, AND ROUTLEDGE.
1860.

THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

LEIGH HUNT.

Now Finally Collected, Revised by Himself,

AND EDITED BY HIS SON,

THORNTON HUNT.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY CORBOULD.

LONDON:
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INTRODUCTION.

English Dept.
AUG 9 1938

Mr. Leigh Hunt had planned a complete and final edition of his Poetical Works, had accomplished his task of getting them together, and had proceeded almost to the close with the process of arrangement, when it was broken off by his death. He had already settled the plan on which he would classify those works, and the principles on which the selection should be made; and had all but finished even the table of contents. Some pieces he had resolved to omit, as not being equal in conception or execution to the estimate of his own maturer judgment. Of others the interest was fugitive; they belonged to a state of affairs which has passed away, and would in some cases be unintelligible without a voluminous commentary, while they would not be appreciated in their true meaning and force without the context afforded by the spirit of the times in which they were written.

Specimens of his political verse have been retained in the present volume, where the interest was of a more general and permanent kind, as in the instance of the Feast of the Poets, and the playful squibs upon George the Fourth. Of others, which belonged to the personal conflict of the day, the subjects have died or have passed into obscurity. Some few which were included in his list the author himself could not find: they are of a trifling kind, left almost entirely among the smaller translations. One or two pieces which were still under consideration were incomplete; but these also

Alloway
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were of minor importance and interest. To certain of the larger poems, even when he had to some extent revised the opinion he entertained at the period of their first composition, he had appended passages of the original which had been struck out, but which he now restored in order to render the record more complete. The ultimate adjustment was left for others, but little remained to be done, and that little has been carried out as nearly as possible on his own plan so far as he had executed it. The reader, therefore, holds in his hand the Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt, collected and arranged with his own final judgment.

That they are valued by the public, and have retained their value in no diminishing degree, has been shown by the demands for successive editions. The author avowed the strongest desire to be included in the number of writers whose works live after them. Of his success in fulfilling that desire he entertained the most moderate estimate, as the reader may see from the following passage in the Letter introductory to the American edition of his works, giving expression to views which had not altered, and which would undoubtedly have been repeated in language not less ingenuous and firm.

"I do not pretend to think that there is no merit in the larger pieces. This would neither be sincere on my part, nor becoming towards those persons who have a regard for them. Writings of any kind which have not ceased to be called for by the public, cannot be destitute of every species of interest; and this has corroborated an opinion which I am fortunate enough to entertain respecting the varieties and degrees of merit which entitle verse to be called poetry.

"Between the greatest epic and tragic inspiration, and the lightest effusion of wit, there is unquestionably, let one-sided critics assert what they will,—for they never venture to argue the point,—a multitude of degrees and classes of

the art, descending through every species of emotion, grave and gay, all of which emanate from greater or less qualifications for being sung or recited, that is to say, for utterance in verse; and all therefore possess a right to that title of poetry for which they maintain constant acceptance with the world. Had this not been the case, Anacreons would never have lasted as long as Homers. Horace, who was one of his own mediocrists, as regards imagination would have disappeared with his class of poets before the star of Virgil; Ariosto would have been extinguished by Dante; the "Rape of the Lock" by "Paradise Lost;" and acacias and roses themselves, on the like principle, ought to have been frowned into nothings by the overshadowings of the oak and the pine. A solemn, subtle, and transcendental world we might have had of it, but none of its inimitable charms *besides*. Claudes and Watteaus, by the same rule, must have come to nothing, because of Titians and Raphaels; Corellis, because of Beethovens; and a thousand loves and graces of females vanished before the renown of Sappho, and the tremendous coming of Madame de Staël.

"In what humble category of poet, or in what humblest corner of the category, if in any at all, the writer of this book may be ranked, it remains perhaps for another and wholly dispassionate generation to pronounce, in case he has the good fortune to reach it."

CONTENTS.

Narrative Poems.

PAGE

The Story of Rimini; or, Fruits of a Parent's Falsehood . 1
Corso and Emilia 33
Hero and Leander 44
The Panther 50
Mahmoud 52
The Gentle Armour; or Three Knights in Steel against one in Linen 54
The Palfrey 64
The Glove and the Lions 90
Godiva 91
Captain Sword and Captain Pen 93
Abou Ben Adhem 124
Jaffár 124
The Bitter Gourd 125
The Inevitable 126
Wallace and Fawdon 128
Kilspindie 132
The Trumpets of Doolkarnein 135
Ballads of Robin Hood 137

Narrative Modernizations.

Death and the Ruffians 152
Cambus Khan 159

Narrative Imitations.

PAGE
The Tapiser's Tale 171
The Shewe of Faire Seeming 176

Political and Critical Poems.

Politics and Poetics; or, the Desperate Situation of a Journalist unhappily smitten with the Love of Rhyme . . 190
The Feast of the Poets 194
Blue Stocking Revels; or, the Feast of the Violets . . . 202
The St. James's Phenomenon. 222
Coronation Soliloquy 225
High and Low; or how to Write History 229
Doctor Ban; or Question for Question 231

Sonnets.

Quiet Evenings. 232
Five Sonnets to Hampstead 232
To the Nile 235
To the Grasshopper and the Cricket 235
To Henry Robertson, John Gattie, and Vincent Novello . . 236
To Thomas Stothard, R.A. 236
To My Wife 237
To Kosciusko 237
On a Lock of Milton's Hair 238
To Percy Shelley 238
To Miss K. 239
To the Author of "Ion" 239
To Charles Dickens 241
To Poerio and his Fellow Patriots 241
The Fish, the Man, and the Spirit 242
The Deformed Child 243

Blank Verse.

PAGE
Paganini 244
Our Cottage 246
A Heaven upon Earth 251
Reflections of a Dead Body 252

Miscellaneous Poems.

Power and Gentleness 255
Thoughts of the Avon 256
To T. L. H. 258
To J. H. 259
To Charles Lamb 262
To William Hazlitt 263
To Barron Field 265
On Hearing a Little Musical Box 268
Hearing Music 269
The Lover of Music to his Piano-forte 270
A Thought or Two on Reading Pomfret's "Choice" . . . 271
Sudden Fine Weather 274
Alter et Idem 276
An Angel in the House 277
Wealth and Womanhood 277
Hymn to Bishop St. Valentine 278
Lines to May 280
Lines to June 281
Christmas 282
Rondeau 285
Burns and Tullochgorum 286
Love-Letters Made of Flowers 287
Songs and Chorus of the Flowers 289
Songs of the Flowers 291
Lines in an Album 295
Ultra Germano-criticasterism 296

PAGE
Bodryddan 296
A Night Rain in Summer 300
Calviultor 300
To the Queen 301
To the Infant Princess Royal 302
Three Visions on the Birth of the Prince of Wales . . . 304
Lines on the Birth of the Princess Alice 307
Right and Might 309
Dream within Dream; or, A Dream in Heaven; or, Evil Minimized 309
Morgiana in England 309
Ode to the Sun 310
A Blessed Spot 312
Verses on a Full-flowing Peruke 313
Doggrel on Double Columns and Large Type 314
The Royal Line 320

Translations.

From Homer.

Reappearance of Achilles on the Field of Battle after his Long Absence 321
Priam rebuking his Sons 324
Priam at the Feet of Achilles 325
Mercury going to the Cave of Calypso 327

From Theocritus.

The Infant Hercules and the Serpents 328
The Syracusan Gossips; or, the Feast of Adonis 331

From Anthology.

Greek Pretenders to Philosophy Described 337
Cupid Swallowed 337

From Catullus.

PAGE
His Return Home to Sirmio 337

From Martial.

Epitaph on Erotion 338

From Walter de Mapes.

The Jovial Priest's Confession 338

From Randolph.

Song of Fairies Robbing an Orchard 340

From Milton.

Plato's Archetypal Man 340

From Dante.

Paulo and Francesca 342
Ugolino and his Children 345

From Petrarch.

Laurá's Bower 348

From Andrea de Basso.

Ode to a Dead Body 350

From Ariosto.

Friends and Foes 353
Angelica and Medoro 364

From Casa.

A Deprecation of the Name of John 369

From Berni.

PAGE
Lazy Corner; or, Bed *versus* Business. 370

From Tasso.

Ode to the Golden Age 377

From Redi.

Bacchus in Tuscany 379

From Pastorini.

Sonnet to Genoa 404

From Casti.

The Debt of the Giuli Tre 405

From Alfieri.

Portrait of Himself 408
English Courtship 408
Learning Tuscan 409

From Frugoni.

Little People Panegyrised 409

From Marot.

The Abbé and his Valet 412
On the Laugh of Madame d'Albret 412
A Love-Lesson 412

From La Fontaine.

Lips *versus* Eyes 413

From Boileau.

The Battle of the Books 416

From Masson.

PAGE
Marriage à la Mode 421

From D'Houdetôt.

Love and Age 421

Anonymous.

A Wise Death 421
The Curate and his Bishop 422

Notes 423

Narrative Poems.

THE STORY OF RIMINI;

OR,

FRUITS OF A PARENT'S FALSEHOOD.

1814—RECAST.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.—*Giovanni Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, has won by his victories the hand of the Princess Francesca, daughter of the reigning Count of Ravenna; and is expected, with a gorgeous procession, to come and marry her. She has never yet seen him. The procession arrives, and is described.*

'Tis morn, and never did a lovelier day
Salute Ravenna from its leafy bay;
For a warm eve, and gentle rains at night,
Have left a sparkling welcome for the light,
And April, with his white hands wet with flowers,
Dazzles the bride-maids, looking from the towers:
Green vineyards and fair orchards, far and near,
Glitter with drops; and heaven is sapphire clear,
And the lark rings it, and the pine-trees glow,
And odours from the citrons come and go,
And all the landscape—earth, and sky, and sea—
Breathes like a bright-eyed face, that laughs out openly.

'Tis nature, full of spirits, wak'd and lov'd.
E'en sloth, to-day, goes quick and unreprov'd;
For where's the living soul, priest, minstrel, clown,
Merchant, or lord, that speeds not to the town?
Hence happy faces, striking through the green
Of leafy roads, at every turn are seen;
And the far ships, lifting their sails of white
Like joyful hands, come up with scatter'd light;

Come gleaming up—true to the wish'd-for day—
And chase the whistling brine, and swirl into the bay.

And well may all the world come crowding there,
If peace returning, and processions rare,
And, to crown all, a marriage in the spring
Can set men's hearts and fancies on the wing;
For, on this beauteous day, Ravenna's pride—
The daughter of their prince—becomes a bride;
A bride to ransom an exhausted land;
And he, whose victories have obtain'd her hand,
Has taken with the dawn—so flies report—
His promis'd journey to the expecting court,
With hasting pomp, and squires of high degree,
The bold Giovanni, Lord of Rimini.

The road, that way, is lined with anxious eyes,
And false announcements and fresh laughters rise.
The horseman hastens through the jeering crowd,
And finds no horse within the gates allow'd;
And who shall tell the drive there, and the din?
The bells, the drums, the crowds yet squeezing in,
The shouts, from mere exuberance of delight,
The mothers with their babes in sore affright,
The bands of troops making important way,
Gallant and grave, the lords of holiday;
Minstrels, and friars, and beggars many a one
That pray, and roll their blind eyes in the sun,
And all the buzzing throngs, that hang like bees
On roofs, and walls, and tops of garden trees?
With tap'stries bright the windows overflow,
By lovely faces brought, that come and go,
Till by their work the charmers take their seats,
Themselves the sweetest pictures in the streets,
In colours by light awnings beautified;
Some re-adjusting tresses newly tied,
Some turning a trim waist, or o'er the flow
Of crimson cloths hanging a hand of snow:
Smiling and laughing some, and some serene,
But all with flowers, and all with garlands green,
And most in flattering talk impatient for the scene.

"For in this manner is the square set out—"

Rimini. P. 3.

At length the approaching trumpets, with a start
On the smooth wind, come dancing to the heart;
The crowd are mute; and, from the southern wall,
A lordly blast gives welcome to the call.
Then comes the crush; and all who best can strive
In shuffling struggle, tow'rds the palace drive,
Where baluster'd and broad, of marble fair,
Its portico commands the public square:
For there Count Guido is to hold his state,
With his fair daughter, seated o'er the gate.
But far too well the square has been supplied;
And, after a rude heave from side to side,
With angry faces turn'd and nothing gain'd,
The order, first found easiest, is maintain'd,
Leaving the pathways only for the crowd,
The space within for the procession proud.

For in this manner is the square set out:—
The sides, path-deep, are crowded round about,
And fac'd with guards, who keep the horse-way clear;
And, round a fountain in the midst, appear—
Seated with knights and ladies, in discourse—
Rare Tuscan wits and warbling troubadours,
Whom Guido (for he lov'd the Muses' race)
Has set there to adorn his public place.
The seats with boughs are shaded from above
Of bays and roses,—trees of wit and love;
And in the midst, fresh whistling through the scene,
The lightsome fountain starts from out the green,
Clear and compact; till, at its height o'errun,
It shakes its loosening silver in the sun.

There, with the wits and beauties, you may see,
As in some nest of faëry poetry,
Some of the chiefs, the noblest in the land,—
Hugo, and Borso of the Liberal Hand,
And Gino, and Ridolfo, and the flower
Of jousters, Everard of the Sylvan Tower;
And Felix the Fine Arm, and him who well
Repaid the Black-Band robbers, Lionel;

With more that have pluck'd beards of Turk and Greek,
And made the close Venetian lower his sails and speak.

There, too, in thickest of the bright-eyed throng,
Stands a young father of Italian song—
Guy Cavalcanti, of a knightly race;
The poet looks out in his earnest face:
He with the pheasant's plume—there—bending now:
Something he speaks around him with a bow,
And all the listening looks, with nods and flushes,
Break round him into smiles and grateful blushes.

Another start of trumpets, with reply;
And o'er the gate a crimson canopy
Opens to right and left its flowing shade,
And Guido issues with the princely maid,
And sits;—the courtiers fall on either side;
But every look is fixed upon the bride,
Who seems all thought at first, and hardly hears
The enormous shout that springs as she appears;
Till, as she views the countless gaze below,
And faces that with grateful homage glow,
A home to leave and husband yet to see
Are mix'd with thoughts of lofty charity:
And hard it is, she thinks, to have no will;
But not to bless these thousands, harder still.
With that a keen and quivering sense of tears
Scarce moves her sweet, proud lip, and disappears;
A smile is underneath, and breaks away,
And round she looks and breathes, as best befits the day.

What need I tell of cheeks, and lips, and eyes,
The locks that fall, and bosom's balmy rise?
Beauty's whole soul is hers, though shadow'd still
With anxious thought, and doubtful maiden will;
A lip for endless love, should all prove just;
An eye that can withdraw into as deep distrust.

While thus with earnest looks the people gaze,
Another shout the neighb'ring quarters raise:

The train are in the town, and gathering near
With noise of cavalry and trumpets clear,
A princely music unbedinn'd with drums;
The mighty brass seems opening as it comes;
And now it fills, and now it shakes the air,
And now it bursts into the sounding square;
At which the crowd with such a shout rejoice,
Each thinks he's deafen'd with his neighbour's voice.
Then with a long-drawn breath the clangours die,
The palace trumpets give a last reply,
And clustering hoofs succeed, with stately stir
Of snortings proud and clinking furniture,—
The most majestic sound of human will:
Nought else is heard sometime, the people are so still.

First come the trumpeters, clad all in white,
Except the breast, which wears a scutcheon bright.
By four and four they ride, on horses gray;
And as they sit along their easy way,
To the steed's motion yielding as they go,
Each plants his trumpet on his saddle-bow.

The heralds next appear, in vests attir'd,
Of stiffening gold with radiant colours fir'd;
And then the pursuivants who wait on these,
All dress'd in painted richness to the knees;
Each rides a dappled horse, and bears a shield,
Charg'd with three heads upon a golden field.[1]

Twelve ranks of squires come after, twelve in one,
With forked pennons lifted in the sun,
Which tell, as they look backward in the wind,
The bearings of the knights that ride behind.
Their horses are deep bay; and every squire
His master's colour shows in his attire.

These past, and at a lordly distance, come
The knights themselves, and fill the quickening hum—
The flower of Rimini. Apart they ride,
Two in a rank, their falchions by their side,
But otherwise unarm'd, and clad in hues
Such as their ladies had been pleas'd to chuse,

Bridal and gay,—orange, and pink, and white,—
All but the scarlet cloak for every knight;
Which thrown apart, and hanging loose behind,
Rests on the horse, and ruffles in the wind.
The horses, black and glossy every one,
Supply a further stately unison—
A solemn constancy of martial show;
Their frothy bits keep wrangling as they go.
The bridles red, and saddle-cloths of white,
Match well the blackness with its glossy light,
While the rich horse-cloths, mantling half the steed,
Are some of them all thick with golden thread;
Others have spots, on grounds of different hue—
As burning stars upon a cloth of blue;
Or heart's-ease purple with a velvet light,
Rich from the glary yellow, thickening bright;
Or silver roses in carnation sewn,
Or flowers in heaps, or colours pure alone:
But all go sweeping back, and seem to dress
The forward march with loitering stateliness.

The crowd, with difference of delight, admire
Horseman and horse, the motion and the attire.
Some watch the riders' looks as they go by,
Their self-possess'd though pleas'd observancy;
And some their skill admire, and careless heed,
Or body curving to the rearing steed,
Or patting hand that best persuades the check,
And makes the quarrel up with a proud neck.
Others are bent upon the horses most,—
Their shape, their breed, the glory of their host:
The small bright head, free nostrils, fetlocks clean,
The branching veins ridging the glossy lean,
The start and snatch, as if they felt the comb,
With mouths that fling about the creamy foam.—
The snorting turbulence, the nod, the champing,
The shift, the tossing, and the fiery tramping.

And now the Princess, pale and with fix'd eye,
Perceives the last of those precursors nigh,

Each rank uncovering as they pass in state,
Both to the courtly fountain and the gate;
And then a second interval succeeds
Of stately length, and then a troop of steeds
Milk-white and azure-draped, Arabian bred,
Each by a blooming boy lightsomely led.
In every limb is seen their faultless race,
A fire well-temper'd, and a free left grace:
Slender their spotless shapes, and greet the sight
With freshness after all those colours bright;
And as with easy pitch their steps they bear,
Their yielding heads have half a loving air,
These for a princely present are divin'd,
And show the giver is not far behind.

The talk increases now, and now advance,
Space after space, with many a sprightly prance,
The pages of the court, in rows of three;
Of white and crimson in their livery.
Space after space, and still the train appear;
A fervent whisper fills the general ear—
"Ah—yes—no! 'tis not he, but 'tis the squires
Who go before him when his pomp requires."
And now his huntsman shows the lessening train,
Now the squire-carver, and the chamberlain;
And now his banner comes, and now his shield,
Borne by the squire that waits him to the field;
And then an interval,—a lordly space;—
A pin-drop silence strikes o'er all the place.
The Princess, from a distance, scarcely knows
Which way to look; her colour comes and goes,
And, with an impulse like a piteous plea,
She lays her hand upon her father's knee,
Who looks upon her with a laboured smile,
Gathering it up into his own the while,
When some one's voice, as if it knew not how
To check itself, exclaims, "The Prince! now, now!"
And on a milk-white courser, like the air,
A glorious figure springs into the square:—
Up, with a burst of thunder, goes the shout,
And rolls the trembling walls and peopled roofs about.

Never was nobler finish of fair sight,—
'Twas like the coming of a shape of light;
And many a lovely gazer, with a start,
Felt the quick pleasure smite across her heart.
The Princess, who at first could scarcely see,
Though looking still that way from dignity,
Gathers new courage as the praise goes round,
And bends her eyes to learn what they have found.
And see—his horse obeys the check unseen,
And, with an air 'twixt ardent and serene,
Letting a fall of curls about his brow,
He takes, to all, his cap off with a bow.
Then for another, and a deafening shout,
And scarfs are wav'd, and flowers come pouring out;
And, shaken by the noise, the reeling air
Sweeps with a giddy whirl among the fair,
And whisks their garments and their shining hair.

With busy interchange of wonder glows
The crowd, and loves his bravery as he goes;
But on his shape the gentler sight attends,
Moves as he passes, as he bends him bends,—
Watches his air, his gesture, and his face,
And thinks it never saw such manly grace;
So fine are his bare throat, and curls of black,—
So lightsomely dropt in, his lordly back,
His thigh so fitted for the tilt or dance,
So heap'd with strength, and turn'd with elegance;
But, above all, so meaning in his look,
As easy to be read as open book;
And such true gallantry the sex descries
In the grave thanks within his cordial eyes.
His haughty steed, who seems by turns to be
Vex'd and made proud by that cool mastery,
Shakes at his bit, and rolls his eyes with care,
Reaching with stately step at the fine air;
And now and then, sideling his restless pace,
Drops with his hinder legs, and shifts his place,
And feels through all his frame a fiery thrill;
The princely rider on his back sits still,
And looks where'er he likes, and sways him at his will.

Surprise, relief, a joy scarce understood—
Something, in truth, of very gratitude,
And fifty feelings undefin'd and new,
Dart through the bride, and flush her faded hue.
"Could I but once," she thinks, "securely place
A trust for the contents on such a case—
On such a mind, now seemingly beheld—
This chance of mine were hardly one compell'd."
And see! the stranger looking with delight
Tow'rds the sweet fountain with its circle bright,
And bending, as he looks, with frequent thanks,
Beckons a follower to him from the ranks,
And loos'ning, as he speaks, from its light hold,
A princely jewel with its chain of gold,
Sends it, in token he had lov'd him long,
To the young master of Italian song.
The poet starts, and with a lowly grace
Bending his lifted eyes and blushing face,
Looks after his new friend, who scarcely gone
In the wide turning, bows, and passes on.

This is sufficient for the destined bride:
She took an interest first, but now a pride;
And as the Prince comes riding to the place,
Baring his head, and raising his fine face,
She meets his full obeisance with an eye
Of self-permission and sweet gravity;
He looks with touch'd respect, and gazes and goes by.

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.—*The Prince is discovered not to be Giovanni Malatesta, but his brother Paulo, whom he has sent as his proxy. Francesca, nevertheless, is persuaded to be affianced, and goes with him to Rimini. Description of the journey, and of the Ravenna Pine-Forest.*

I PASS the followers, and their closing state;
The court was enter'd by an outer gate;
The Count and Princess had retir'd before,
In time to greet his guest at the hall door:

But something seem'd amiss, and there ensued
Deep talk among the spreading multitude,
Who stood in groups, or pac'd the measur'd street,
Filling with earnest hum the noontide heat.
Nor ceas'd the wonder, as the day increas'd,
And brought no symptoms of a bridal feast;
No mass, no tilt, no largess for the crowd,
Nothing to answer that procession proud,
But a blank look, as if no court had been—
Silence without, and secrecy within;
And nothing heard by listening at the walls,
But now and then a bustling through the halls,
Or the dim organ rous'd at gathering intervals.

The truth was this:—The bridegroom had not come,
But sent his brother Paulo in his room.
The former, said to have a handsome face,
Though lame of foot, ("some victory's very grace;"—
So Guido call'd it,) yet was stern and proud,
Little gallant, and had a chilling cloud
Hanging forever on his blunt address,
Which he mistook for sov'reign manliness:—
But more of this too soon. The father knew
The Prince's faults; and he was conscious too,
That sweet as was his daughter, and prepar'd
To do her duty where appeal was barr'd,
She had a sense of marriage, just and free,
And where the lover wooed but ruggedly,
Might pause, for aught he knew, and fail to strike
A chord her own sweet music so unlike.
The old man, therefore, not unkind at heart,
Yet fond, from habit, of intrigue and art,
And little form'd for sentiments like these
Which seem'd to him mere maiden nicetiess,
(For lovers of the Muse, alas! could then
As well as now, be but half-loving men,)
Had thought at once to gratify the pride,
Of his stern neighbour, and secure the bride,
By telling him, that if, as he had heard,
Busy he was just then, 'twas but a word,
And he might send and wed her by a third;

Only the Count thus farther must presume,
For both their sakes, that still a prince must come.
The bride meantime was told, and not unmov'd,
To look for one no sooner seen than lov'd;
And when Giovanni, struck with what he thought
Mere proof how his triumphant hand was sought,
Despatch'd the wish'd-for prince, who was a man
Noble as eye had seen since earth began,
The effect was perfect, and the future wife
Caught in the elaborate snare—perhaps for life.

One truth, however, craft was forc'd to tell,
And chance, alas! supported it too well.
She saw, when they were hous'd, in Guido's face
A look of stupified surprise take place;
Of anger next, of candour in a while,
And then 'twas told her with a begging smile,
That Prince Giovanni, to his deep chagrin,
Had been delay'd by troubles unforeseen,
But rather than delay his day of bliss,
(If his fair ruler took it not amiss,)
Had sent his brother Paulo in his stead;
"Who," said old Guido, with a nodding head,
"May well be said to represent his brother,
For when you see the one, you know the other."

By this time Paulo join'd them where they stood,
And seeing her in some uneasy mood,
Chang'd the mere cold respects his brother sent
To such a strain of cordial compliment,
And gave her thanks, in terms, and with a face,
So fill'd with attribution of all grace,—
That air, in short, which sets you at your ease
Without implying your perplexities,—
That what with the surprise in every way,
The hurry of the time, the appointed day,
The very shame which now appear'd increas'd
Of begging leave to have her hand releas'd—
And above all, those tones, and words, and looks
Which seem'd to realize the dreams of books,

And help'd her genial fancy to conclude
That fruit of such a stock must all be good,
She knew no longer how she could oppose.
Quick was the plighted troth; and at the close
The proxy, turning 'mid the general hush,
Kiss'd her sweet lips, betwixt a rosy blush.

Two days and nights ensued. At length, a state
Of trumpets issued from the palace gate,
The banners of their brass with favours tied,
And with a blast proclaimed the affianc'd bride.
But not a word the people's silence broke,
Till something of a gift the herald spoke,
And bringing the good coin by handfuls out,
Scatter'd the ready harvest round about;
Then burst the mob into a jovial cry,
And "largess! largess!" claps against the sky,
And bold Giovanni's name, the lord of Rimini.

The rest, however, still were looking on,
Sullen and mute, and scarce the noise was gone,
When riding from the gate with banners rear'd,
Again the gorgeous visitors appear'd.
The Prince was in his place; and in a car,
Before him, glistening like a farewell star,
Sate the dear lady with her brimming eyes,
And off they set, through doubtful looks and cries;
For some too shrewdly guess'd, and some were vex'd
At the dull time, and some the whole perplex'd,
And all great pity thought it to divide
Two that seem'd made for bridegroom and for bride.
Ev'n she, whose wits this strange abrupt event
Had over-borne in pure astonishment,
Could scarce at times a wilder'd cry forbear
At leaving her own home and native air;
Till passing now the limits of the town,
And on the last few gazers looking down,
She saw by the road-side an aged throng,
Who wanting power to bustle with the strong,
Had learnt their gracious mistress was to go,

And gather'd there, an unconcerted show.
Bending they stood, with their old foreheads bare,
And the winds finger'd with their reverend hair.
"Farewell, farewell, my friends!" she would have cried,
But in her throat the leaping accents died,
And waving with her hand a vain adieu,
She dropt her veil, and in her grief withdrew,
And let the kindly tears their own good course pursue.

The morn was sweet, as when they journey'd last;—
The smoke from cottage-tops ran bright and fast,
And every tree in passing, one by one,
Gleam'd out with twinkles of the golden sun:
For leafy was the road, with tall array,
On either side, of mulberry and bay,
And distant snatches of blue hills between;
And there the alder was with its bright green,
And the broad chestnut, and the poplar's shoot,
That like a feather waves from head to foot,
With ever and anon majestic pines;
And still, from tree to tree, the early vines
Hung garlanding the way in amber lines.

Nor long the Princess kept her from the view
Of the dear scenes her happy childhood knew;
For sitting now, calm from the gush of tears,
With dreaming eye fix'd down, and half-shut ears,
Hearing, yet hearing not, the fervent sound
Of hoofs thick reckoning and the wheel's moist round,
A call of "slower," from the farther part
Of the check'd riders, woke her with a start,
And looking up again, half sigh, half stare,
She lifts her veil, and feels the freshening air.

'Tis down a hill they go, gentle indeed,
And such as with a bold and playful speed
Another time they would have scorn'd to heed;
But now they take a lady down the hill,
And feel they should consult her gentle will.

And now with thicker shades the pines appear,—
The noise of hoofs grows duller on the ear;

And quitting suddenly their gravelly toil,
The wheels go spinning o'er a sandy soil.
Here first the silence of the country seems
To come about her with its listening dreams;
And full of anxious thoughts, half-freed from pain,
She fell into her musing mood again;
Leaving the others, who had pass'd that way
In careless spirits of the first blithe day,
To look about, and mark the reverend scene,
For awful tales renown'd and everlasting green.

A heavy spot the forest looks at first,
To one grim shade condemn'd, and sandy thirst,
Chequer'd with thorns, and thistles run to seed,
Or plashy pools half-cover'd with green weed,
About whose sides the swarming insects fry
In the hot sun, a noisome company;
But, entering more and more, they quit the sand
At once, and strike upon a grassy land,
From which the trees as from a carpet rise
In knolls and clumps, in rich varieties.
The knights are for a moment forc'd to rein
Their horses in, which, feeling turf again,
Thrill, and curvet, and long to be at large
To scour the space, and give the winds a charge,
Or pulling tight the bridles as they pass,
Dip their warm mouths into the freshening grass:
But soon in easy rank, from glade to glade,
Proceed they, coasting underneath the shade;
Some baring to the cool their placid brows,
Some looking upward through the glimmering boughs
Or peering into spots that inwardly
Open green glooms, and half-prepar'd to see
The lady cross it, that as stories tell,
Ran loud and torn before the knight of hell.[2]
Various the trees and passing foliage here,—
Wild pear, and oak, and dusky juniper,
With briony between in trails of white,
And ivy, and the suckle's streaky light,
And, moss, warm gleaming with a sudden mark,
Like growths of sunshine left upon the bark;

And still the pine, flat-topp'd, and dark, and tall,
In lordly right predominant o'er all.
Anon the sweet birds, like a sudden throng
Of happy children, ring their tangled song
From out the greener trees; and then a cloud
Of cawing rooks breaks o'er them, gathering loud
Like savages at ships; and then again
Nothing is heard but their own stately train,
Or ring-dove that repeats his pensive plea,
Or startled gull up-screaming toward the sea.
But scarce their eyes encounter living thing
Save, now and then, a goat loose wandering,
Or a few cattle looking up askance
With ruminant meek mouths and sleepy glance,
Or once, a plodding woodman, old and bent,
Passing, half wond'ring—half indifferent—
Yet turning at the last to look once more;
Then feels his trembling staff, and onward as before.

So ride they pleas'd;—till now the couching sun
Levels his final look through shadows dun;
And the clear moon, with meek o'er-lifted face,
Seems come to look into the silvering place.
Then woke the bride indeed, for then was heard
The sacred bell by which all hearts are stirr'd,—
The tongue 'twixt heav'n and earth, the memory mild,
Which bids adore the Mother and her Child.
The train are hush'd; they halt; their heads are bare;
Earth for a moment breathes angelic air.
Francesca weeps for lowliness and love;
Her heart is at the feet of Her who sits above.

Softly they move again through beam and shade;
Till now by stragglers met, and watch-dogs bay'd,
They quit the piny labyrinths, and soon
Emerge into the full and day-like moon:
Chilling it seems; and pushing steed on steed,
They start them freshly with a homeward speed.
Then well-known fields they pass, and straggling cots,
Boy-storied trees, and love-remember'd spots,

And turning last a sudden corner, see
The moonlit towers of wakeful Rimini.
The marble bridge comes heaving forth below
With a long gleam; and nearer as they go,
They see the still Marecchia, cold and bright,
Sleeping along with face against the light.
A hollow trample now,—a fall of chains,—
The bride has enter'd,—not a voice remains;—
Night, and a maiden silence, wrap the plains.

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.—*Effects of the sight and manners of her husband upon the bride. His character. Paulo discovers the part he had been led to play. Result of the discovery to him and Francesca. Giovanni is called away from Rimini by a revolt. Description of a garden, and of a summer-house.*

WEAK were the moon to welcome princely trains:—
Thousands of lights, thousands of faces, strains
Of music upon music, roaring showers,
High as the roofs, of blessings mix'd with flowers;
Through these, with one huge hopeful wild accord,
The gentle lady of a fiery lord
Is welcom'd, and is borne straight to the halls
That hold his presence in the palace walls;
And there, as pale as death, the future wife
Looks on his face that is to sway her life.
It stoop'd; she knelt; a kiss was on her brow;
And two huge hands rais'd her she scarce knew how.

Oh, foolish, false old man! now boast thine art,
That has undone thee in a daughter's heart.

Great was the likeness that the brothers bore;
The lie spoke truth in that, and lied the more.
Not that the face on which the lady stared
Was hideous; nay, 'twas handsome; yet it scared.
The likeness was of race, the difference dire—
The brows were shadow'd with a stormy fire;
The handsome features had a wild excess,
That discommended e'en the handsomeness;

And though a smile the lip now gentlier warm'd,
The whole big face o'erhung a trunk deform'd,—
Warp'd in the shoulder, broken at the hip,
Though strong withal, nor spoilt for soldiership;
A heap of vigour planted on two stands
Of shapeless bone, and hung with giant hands.

Compare with this the shape that fetch'd the bride!
Compare the face now gazing by its side!
A face, in which was nothing e'en to call
A stamp exclusive and professional:
No courtier's face, and yet the smile was there;
No scholar's, yet the look was deep and rare;
No soldier's, for the power was all of mind,
Too true for violence, and too refin'd:
A countenance, in short, seem'd made to show
How far the genuine flesh and blood would go;
A morning glass of unaffected nature,
Something that baffled looks of loftier feature,—
The visage of a glorious human creature.

Nevertheless, the cripple foremost there,
Stern gainer by a crafty father's care,
But ignorant of the plot, and aught beside,
Except that he had won a peerless bride,—
This vision, dress'd beyond its own dress'd court
To cloak defects that still belied its port,
Gave the bewilder'd beauty what was meant
For thanks so gracious, flattery so content,
And spoke in tones so harsh, yet so assur'd,
So proud of a good fortune now secur'd,
That her low answers, for mere shame, implied
Thanks for his thanks, and pleasure in his pride;
And so the organ blew, and the priest read,
And under his grim gaze the life-long words were said.

A banquet follow'd, not in form and state,
But small, and cheerful, and considerate;
Her maidens half-enclos'd her; and her lord
With such mild grace presided at the board,

And time went flowing in a tide so fair,
That from the calm she felt a new despair.—
Suddenly her eyes clos'd, her lips turn'd white,
The maidens in alarm enclos'd her quite,
And the Prince rose, but with no gentle looks;
He bade them give her air, with sharp rebukes,
Grasp'd her himself with a suspicious force,
And altogether show'd a mood so coarse,
So hasty, and to love so ill attun'd,
That, with her own good will, the lady swoon'd.

Alas for wrongs that nature does the frame!
The pride she gives compensates not the shame.
And yet why moot those puzzles? 'tis the pride,
And not the shape, were still the thing to hide.
Spirits there are (I've known them) that like gods
Who dwelt of old in rustical abodes,
Have beam'd through clay the homeliest, bright and wise,
And made divinest windows of the eyes.
Two fiends possessed Giovanni's,—Will and Scorn;
And high they held him, till a third was born.
He strove to hide the secret from himself,—
But his shape rode him like some clinging elf
At once too scorn'd and dreaded to be own'd.
Valour, and wit, and victory enthron'd,
Might bind, he thought, a woman to his worth,
Beyond the threads of all the fops on earth;
But on his secret soul the fiend still hung,
Darken'd his face, made sour and fierce his tongue,
And was preparing now a place for thee
In his wild heart, O murderous Jealousy!

Not without virtues was the Prince. Who is?
But all were marr'd by moods and tyrannies.
Brave, decent, splendid, faithful to his word,
Late watching, busy with the first that stirr'd,
Yet rude, sarcastic, ever in the vein
To give the last thing he would suffer,—pain,
He made his rank serve meanly to his gall,
And thought his least good word a salve for all.

Virtues in him of no such marvellous weight
Claim tow'rd themselves the exercise of great.
He kept no reckoning with his sweets and sours;
He'd hold a sullen countenance for hours,
And then if pleas'd to cheer himself a space,
Look for th' immediate rapture in your face,
And wonder that a cloud could still be there,
How small soever, when his own was fair.
Yet such is conscience, so design'd to keep
Stern central watch, though fancied fast asleep,
And so much knowledge of one's self there lies
Cored, after all, in our complacencies,
That no suspicion touch'd his temper more
Than that of wanting on the generous score:
He overwhelm'd it with a weight of scorn,
Was proud at eve, inflexible at morn,
In short, ungenerous for a week to come,
And all to strike that desperate error dumb.
Taste had he, in a word, for high-turn'd merit,
But not the patience or the genial spirit;
And so he made, 'twixt daring and defect,
A sort of fierce demand on your respect,—
Which, if assisted by his high degree,
It gave him in some eyes a dignity,
And struck a meaner deference in the small,
Left him at last unlovable with all.

What sort of life the bride and bridegroom led
From that first jar the history hath not said:
No happy one, to guess from looks constrain'd,
Attentions over-wrought, and pleasures feign'd.
The Prince, 'twas clear, was anxious to imply
That all was love and grave felicity;
The least suspicion of his pride's eclipse
Blacken'd his lowering brow, and blanch'd his lips,
And dreadful look'd he underneath his wrath;—
Francesca kept one tranquil-seeming path,
Mild with her lord, generous to high and low,—
But in her heart was anger too, and woe.

Paulo meantime, the Prince that fetch'd the bride,
(Oh, shame that lur'd him from a brother's side !)
Had learnt, I know not how, the secret snare,
That gave her up to his admiring care.
Some babbler, may-be, of old Guido's court,
Or foolish friend had told him, half in sport;
But to his heart the fatal flattery went,
And grave he grew, and inwardly intent,
And ran back in his mind, with sudden spring,
Look, gesture, smile, speech, silence, everything,
E'en what before had seem'd indifference,
And read them over in another sense.
Then would he blush with sudden self-disdain,
To think how fanciful he was, and vain ;
And with half angry, half regretful sigh,
Tossing his chin, and feigning a free eye,
Breathe off, as 'twere, the idle tale, and look
About him for his falcon or his book;
Scorning that ever he should entertain
One thought that in the end might give his brother pain.
Not that he lov'd him much, or could ; but still
Brother was brother, and ill visions ill.

This start, however, came so often round,—
So often fell he in deep thought, and found
Occasion to renew his carelessness,
Yet every time the little power grown less,
That by degrees, half wearied, half inclined,
To the sweet struggling image he resign'd;
And merely, as he thought, to make the best
Of what by force would come about his breast,
Began to bend down his admiring eyes
On all her soul-rich looks and qualities,
Turning their shapely sweetness every way,
Till 'twas his food and habit day by day,
And she became companion of his thought ;—
Oh wretched sire ! thy snare has yet but half been wrought.

Love by the object lov'd is soon discern'd,
And grateful pity is love half return'd.

Of pity for herself the rest was made,
Of first impressions and belief betray'd;
Of all which the unhappy sire had plann'd
To fix his dove within the falcon's hand.
Bright grew the morn whenever Paulo came;
The only word to write was either's name;
Soft in each other's presence fell their speech;
Each, though they look'd not, felt they saw but each;
'Twas day, 'twas night, as either came or went,
And bliss was in two hearts, with misery strangely blent.

Oh, now ye gentle hearts, now think awhile,
Now while ye still can think and still can smile;
Thou, Paulo, most;—whom, though the most to blame,
The world will visit with but half the shame.
Bethink thee of the future days of one
Who holds her heart the rightest heart undone.
Thou holdest not thine such. Be kind and wise;—
Where creeps the once frank wisdom of thine eyes?
To meet e'en thus may cost her many a tear:
"Meet not at all!" cries Fate, to all who love and fear.

A fop there was, rich, noble, well receiv'd,
Who, pleas'd to think the Princess inly griev'd,
Had dar'd to hope, beside the lion's bower,
Presumptuous fool! to play the paramour.
Watching his time one day, when the grim lord
Had left her presence with an angry word,
And giving her a kind, adoring glance,
The coxcomb feign'd to press her hand by chance;
The Princess gaz'd a moment with calm eyes,
Then bade him call the page that fann'd away the flies.

For days, for weeks, the daring coward shook
At dreams of daggers in the Prince's look,
Till finding nothing said, the shame and fright
Turn'd his conceited misery to spite.
The lady's silence might itself be fear;
What if there lurk'd some wondrous rival near?
He watch'd.—He watch'd all movements, looks, words, sighs,
And soon found cause to bless his shabby eyes.

It chanc'd alas! that for some tax abhorr'd,
A conquer'd district fell from its new lord;
Black as a storm the Prince the frontier cross'd
In fury to regain his province lost,
Leaving his brother, who had been from home
On state affairs, to govern in his room.
Right zealous was the brother; nor had aught
Yet giv'n Giovanni one mistrusting thought.
He deem'd his consort cold as wintriest night,
Paulo a kind of very fop of right;
For though he cloak'd his own unshapeliness,
And thought to glorify his power, with dress,
He held all virtues, not in his rough ken,
But pickthank pedantries in handsome men.

The Prince had will'd, however, that his wife
Should lead, till his return, a closer life,
She therefore disappear'd; not pleas'd, not proud
To have her judgment still no voice allow'd;
Not without many a gentle hope repress'd,
And tears; yet conscious that retreat was best.
Besides, she lov'd the place to which she went—
A bower, a nest, in which her grief had spent
Its calmest time: and as it was her last
As well as sweetest, and the fate comes fast
That is to fill it with a dreadful cry,
And make its walls ghastly to passers by,
I'll hold the gentle reader for a space
Ling'ring with piteous wonder in the place.

A noble range it was, of many a rood,
Wall'd and tree-girt, and ending in a wood.
A small sweet house o'erlook'd it from a nest
Of pines:—all wood and garden was the rest,
Lawn, and green lane, and covert:—and it had
A winding stream about it, clear and glad,
With here and there a swan, the creature born
To be the only graceful shape of scorn.
The flower-beds all were liberal of delight;
Roses in heaps were there, both red and white,

Lilies angelical, and gorgeous glooms
Of wall-flowers, and blue hyacinths, and blooms
Hanging thick clusters from light boughs; in short,
All the sweet cups to which the bees resort,
With plots of grass, and leafier walks between
Of red geraniums, and of jessamine,
And orange, whose warm leaves so finely suit,
And look as if they shade a golden fruit;
And midst the flow'rs, turf'd round beneath a shade
Of darksome pines, a babbling fountain play'd,
And 'twixt their shafts you saw the water bright,
Which through the tops glimmer'd with show'ring light.
So now you stood to think what odours best
Made the air happy in that lovely nest;
And now you went beside the flowers, with eyes
Earnest as bees, restless as butterflies;
And then turn'd off into a shadier walk
Close and continuous, fit for lover's talk;
And then pursued the stream, and as you trod
Onward and onward, o'er the velvet sod,
Felt on your face an air, watery and sweet,
And a new sense in your soft-lighting feet.
At last you enter'd shades indeed, the wood,
Broken with glens and pits, and glades far-view'd,
Through which the distant palace now and then
Look'd lordly forth with many-window'd ken;
A land of trees,—which reaching round about
In shady blessing stretch'd their old arms out;
With spots of sunny openings, and with nooks
To lie and read in, sloping into brooks,
Where at her drink you startled the slim deer,
Retreating lightly with a lovely fear.
And all about, the birds kept leafy house,
And sung and darted in and out the boughs;
And all about, a lovely sky of blue
Clearly was felt, or down the leaves laugh'd through;
And here and there, in ev'ry part, were seats,
Some in the open walks, some in retreats,—
With bow'ring leaves o'erhead, to which the eye
Look'd up half sweetly and half awfully,—

Places of nestling green, for poets made,
Where, when the sunshine struck a yellow shade,
The rugged trunks, to inward peeping sight,
Throng'd in dark pillars up the gold green light.

But 'twixt the wood and flowery walks, half-way,
And form'd of both, the loveliest portion lay,—
A spot, that struck you like enchanted ground:—
It was a shallow dell, set in a mound
Of sloping orchards,—fig, and almond trees,
Cherry and pine, with some few cypresses;
Down by whose roots, descending darkly still,
(You saw it not, but heard) there gush'd a rill,
Whose low sweet talking seem'd as if it said
Something eternal to that happy shade.
The ground within was lawn, with fruits and flowers
Heap'd towards the centre, half of citron bowers;
And in the middle of those golden trees,
Half seen amidst the globy oranges,
Lurk'd a rare summer-house, a lovely sight,—
Small, marble, well-proportion'd creamy white,
Its top with vine-leaves sprinkled,—but no more,—
And a young bay-tree either side the door.
The door was to the wood, forward and square,
The rest was domed at top and circular;
And through the dome the only light came in,
Ting'd as it enter'd by the vine-leaves thin.

It was a beauteous piece of ancient skill,
Spar'd from the rage of war, and perfect still;
By some suppos'd the work of fairy hands,—
Fam'd for luxurious taste, and choice of lands,
Alcina or Morgana,—who from fights
And errant fame inveigled amorous knights,
And liv'd with them in a long round of blisses,
Feasts, concerts, baths, and bower-enshaded kisses.
But 'twas a temple, as its sculpture told,
Built to the Nymphs that haunted there of old;
For o'er the door was carv'd a sacrifice
By girls and shepherds brought, with reverent eyes,

Of sylvan drinks and foods, simple and sweet,
And goats with struggling horns and planted feet:
And round about ran, on a line with this,
In like relief, a world of pagan bliss,
That show'd, in various scenes, the nymphs themselves;
Some by the water-side, on bowery shelves
Leaning at will,—some in the stream at play,—
Some pelting the young Fauns with buds of May,—
Or half asleep pretending not to see
The latter in the brakes come creepingly,
While from their careless urns, lying aside
In the long grass, the straggling waters glide.
Never, be sure, before or since was seen
A summer-house so fine in such a nest of green.

Ah, happy place! balm of regrets and fears,
E'en when thy very loveliness drew tears!
The time is coming, when to hear thee nam'd
Will be to make Love, Guilt, Revenge's self asham'd.

All the sweet range, wood, flower-bed, grassy plot,
Francesca lov'd, but most of all this spot.
Whenever she walk'd forth, wherever went
About the grounds, to this at last she bent:
Here she had brought a lute and a few books;
Here would she lie for hours, often with looks
More sorrowful by far, yet sweeter too;
Sometimes with firmer comfort, which she drew
From sense of injury's self, and truth sustain'd:
Sometimes with rarest resignation, gain'd
From meek self-pitying mixtures of extremes
Of hope and soft despair, and child-like dreams,
And all that promising calm smile we see
In Nature's face, when we look patiently.
Then would she think of heaven; and you might hear
Sometimes, when everything was hush'd and clear,
Her sweet, rich voice from out those shades emerging,
Singing the evening anthem to the Virgin.
The gardeners, and the rest, who serv'd the place,
And bless'd whenever they beheld her face,

Knelt when they heard it, bowing and uncover'd,
And felt as if in air some sainted beauty hover'd.

Oh weak old man! Love, saintliest life, and she,
Might all have dwelt together, but for thee.

One day,—'twas on a gentle, autumn noon,
When the cicale cease to mar the tune
Of birds and brooks—and morning work is done,
And shades have heavy outlines in the sun,—
The Princess came to her accustomed bower
To get her, if she could, a soothing hour;
Trying, as she was used, to leave her cares
Without, and slumberously enjoy the airs,
And the low-talking leaves, and that cool light
The vines let in, and all that hushing sight
Of closing wood seen through the opening door,
And distant plash of waters tumbling o'er,
And smell of citron blooms, and fifty luxuries more.

She tried as usual for the trial's sake,
For even that diminish'd her heart-ache;
And never yet, how ill soe'er at ease,
Came she for nothing 'midst the flowers and trees.
Yet how it was she knew not, but that day
She seem'd to feel too lightly borne away,—
Too much reliev'd,—too much inclin'd to draw
A careless joy from everything she saw,
And looking round her with a new-born eye,
As if some tree of knowledge had been nigh,
To taste of nature primitive and free,
And bask at ease in her heart's liberty.

Painfully clear those rising thoughts appear'd,
With something dark at bottom that she fear'd:
And turning from the trees her thoughtful look,
She reach'd o'erhead, and took her down a book,
And fell to reading with as fix'd an air,
As though she had been wrapt since morning there.

'Twas "Launcelot of the Lake," a bright romance,
That like a trumpet made young pulses dance,
Yet had a softer note that shook still more:—
She had begun it but the day before,
And read with a full heart, half sweet, half sad,
How old King Ban was spoil'd of all he had
But one fair castle: how one summer's day
With his fair queen and child he went away
In hopes King Arthur might resent his wrong;
How reaching by himself a hill ere long,
He turn'd to give his castle a last look,
And saw its calm white face; and how a smoke,
As he was looking, burst in volumes forth,
And good King Ban saw all that he was worth,
And his fair castle burning to the ground,
So that his wearied pulse felt overwound,
And he lay down, and said a prayer apart
For those he lov'd, and broke his poor old heart.
Then read she of the queen with her young child,
How she came up, and nearly had gone wild,
And how in journeying on in her despair,
She reach'd a lake, and met a lady there,
Who pitied her, and took the baby sweet
Into her arms, when lo! with closing feet
She sprang up all at once, like bird from brake,
And vanish'd with him underneath the lake.
Like stone thereat the mother stood, alas!—
The fairy of the place the lady was,
And Launcelot (so the boy was called) became
Her pupil, till in search of knightly fame
He went to Arthur's court, and play'd his part
So rarely, and display'd so frank a heart,
That what with all his charms of look and limb,
The Queen Geneura fell in love with him:—
And here, such interest in the tale she took,
Francesca's eyes went deeper in the book.

Ready she sat with one hand to turn o'er
The leaf, to which her thoughts ran on before,
The other on the table, half enwreath'd
In the thick tresses over which she breath'd.

So sat she fix'd, and so observ'd was she
Of one, who at the door stood tenderly,—
Paulo,—who from a window seeing her
Go straight across the lawn, and guessing where,
Had thought she was in tears, and found, that day,
His usual efforts vain to keep away.
Twice had he seen her since the Prince was gone,
On some small matter needing unison;
Twice linger'd, and convers'd, and grown long friends;
But not till now where no one else attends.—
"May I come in?" said he:—it made her start,—
That smiling voice;—she colour'd, press'd her heart
A moment, as for breath, and then with free
And usual tone said,—"O yes,——certainly."
There's wont to be, at conscious times like these,
An affectation of a bright-eyed ease,
An air of something quite serene and sure,
As if to seem so, were to be, secure.
With this the lovers met, with this they spoke,
With this sat down to read the self-same book,
And Paulo, by degrees, gently embrac'd
With one permitted arm her lovely waist;
And both their cheeks, like peaches on a tree,
Came with a touch together thrillingly,
And o'er the book they hung, and nothing said,
And every lingering page grew longer as they read.

As thus they sat, and felt with leaps of heart
Their colour change, they came upon the part
Where fond Geneura, with her flame long nurst,
Smil'd upon Launcelot, when he kiss'd her first:—
That touch, at last, through every fibre slid;
And Paulo turn'd, scarce knowing what he did,
Only he felt he could no more dissemble,
And kiss'd her, mouth to mouth, all in a tremble.—
Oh then she wept,—the poor Francesca wept;
And pardon oft he pray'd; and then she swept
The tears away, and look'd him in the face,
And, well as words might save the truth disgrace,
She told him all, up to that very hour,
The father's guile, th' undwelt-in bridal bower,—

And wish'd for wings on which they two might soar
Far, far away, as doves to their own shore,
With claim from none.—That day they read no more.

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.—*The lovers are betrayed to the Prince. He slays them, and sends their bodies in one hearse to Ravenna.*

BUT other thoughts, on other wings than theirs,
Came bringing them, ere long, their own despairs.
The spiteful fop I spoke of, he that set
His eyes at work to pay his anger's debt,—
This idiot, prying from a neighb'ring tower,
Had watch'd the lover to the lady's bower,
And flew to make a madman of her lord,
Just then encamp'd with loss, a shame his soul abhorr'd.

Pale first, then red, his eyes upon the stretch,
Then deadly white, the husband heard the wretch,
Who in soft terms, almost with lurking smile,
Ran on, expressing his "regret" the while.
The husband, prince, cripple, and brother heard;
Then seem'd astonish'd at the man; then stirr'd
His tongue but could not speak; then dash'd aside
His chair as he arose, and loudly cried,
"Liar and madman! thou art he was seen
Risking the fangs which thou hast rush'd between.
Regorge the filth in thy detested throat."
And at the word, with his huge fist he smote
Like iron on the place, then seized him all,
And dash'd in swoon against the bleeding wall.

'Twas dusk:—he summon'd an old chieftain stern,
Giving him charge of all till his return,
And with one servant got to horse and rode
All night, until he reached a lone abode
Not far from the green bower. Next day at noon,
Through a bye-way, free to himself alone,
Alone he rode, yet ever in disguise,
His hat pull'd over his assassin eyes,

And coming through the wood, there left his horse,
Then down amid the fruit-trees, half by force,
Made way; and by the summer house's door,
Which he found shut, paus'd till a doubt was o'er.
Paus'd, and gave ear. There was a low sweet voice:—
The door was one that open'd without noise;
And opening it, he look'd within, and saw,
Nought hearing, nought suspecting, not in awe
Of one created thing in earth or skies,
The lovers, interchanging words and sighs,
Lost in the heaven of one another's eyes.
"To thee it was my father wedded me,"
Francesca said:—"I never lov'd but thee.
The rest was ever but an ugly dream."—
"Damn'd be the soul that says it," cried a scream.
Horror is in the room,—shrieks,—roaring cries,
Parryings of feeble palms—blindly shut eyes:—
What, without arms, avail'd grief, strength, despair?
Or what the two poor hands put forth in prayer?
Hot is the dagger from the brother's heart,
Deep in the wife's:—dead both and dash'd apart,
Mighty the murderer felt as there they lay;
Mighty, for one huge moment, o'er his prey;
Then, like a drunken man, he rode away.

To tell what horror smote the people's ears,
The questionings, the amaze, the many tears,
The secret household thoughts, the public awe,
And how those ran back shrieking, that first saw
The beauteous bodies lying in the place,
Bloody and dead in midst of all their grace,
Would keep too long the hideous deed in sight;
Back was the slayer in his camp that night;
And fell next day with such a desperate sword
Upon the rebel army at a ford,
As sent the red news rolling to the sea,
And steadied his wild nerves with victory.
At court as usual then he reappear'd,
Fierce, but self-centred, willing to be fear'd;
Nor, saving once, at a lone chamber-door,
Utter'd he word of those now seen no more,

Nor dull'd his dress, nor shunn'd the being seen,
But look'd, talk'd, reign'd, as they had never been.

Nevertheless, his shame and misery still,
Only less great than his enormous will,
Darken'd his heart; and in the cloud there hung,
Like some small haunting knell for ever rung,
Words which contain'd a dawning mystery,
" It was to thee my father wedded me."
The silence of his pride at length he broke,
With handmaid then, and then with priest he spoke,
And, sham'd beyond all former shame, yet rais'd
From Jealousy's worst hell, his fancy gaz'd
On the new scene that made his wrath less wild—
The sire ensnaring his devoted child.
Him foremost he beheld in all the past,
And him he now ordain'd to gather all at last.

One dull day, therefore, from the palace-gate,
A blast of trumpets blew, like voice of fate,
And all in sable clad forth came again
A remnant of the former sprightly train,
With churchmen intermixt; and closing all,
Was a blind hearse, hung with an ermined pall,
And bearing on its top, together set,
A prince's and princess's coronet.
Simply they came along, amidst the sighs
And tears of those who looked with wondering eyes:
Nor bell they had, nor choristers in white,
Nor stopp'd, as most expected, within sight;
But pass'd the streets, the gates, the last abode,
And tow'rds Ravenna held their silent road.

Before it left, the Prince had sent swift word
To the old Duke of all that had occurr'd:
" And though I shall not," (so concluded he)
" Otherwise touch thine age's misery,
" Yet as I would that both one grave should hide,
" Which must and shall not be, where I reside,
" 'Tis fit, though all have something to deplore,
" That he who join'd them first, should keep to part no more."

The wretched father, who, when he had read
This letter, felt it wither his gray head,
And ever since had pac'd about his room,
Trembling, and seiz'd as with approaching doom,
Had given such orders as he well could frame
To meet devoutly whatsoever came;
And, as the news immediately took flight,
Few in Ravenna went to sleep that night,
But talk'd the business over, and review'd
All that they knew of her, the fair and good;
And so with wond'ring sorrow, the next day,
Waited till they should see that sad array.

The days were then at close of autumn,—still,
A little rainy, and, towards nightfall, chill;
There was a fitful moaning air abroad;
And ever and anon, over the road,
The last few leaves came fluttering from the trees,
Whose trunks, wet, bare, and cold, seem'd ill at ease.
The people, who, from reverence, kept at home,
Listen'd till afternoon to hear them come;
And hour on hour went by, and nought was heard
But some chance horseman, or the wind that stirr'd,
Till tow'rds the vesper hour; and then, 'twas said,
Some heard a voice, which seem'd as if it read;
And others said, that they could hear a sound
Of many horses trampling the moist ground.
Still nothing came:—till on a sudden, just
As the wind open'd in a rising gust,
A voice of chaunting rose, and, as it spread,
They plainly heard the anthem for the dead.
It was the choristers, who went to meet
The train, and now were entering the first street.
Then turn'd aside that city, young and old,
And in their lifted hands the gushing sorrow roll'd.

But of the older people few could bear
To keep the window, when the train drew near;
And all felt double tenderness to see
The bier approaching, slow and steadily,

On which those two in senseless coldness lay,
Who, but some brief years since,—it seem'd a day,—
Had left their walls, lovely in form and mind;
In sunny manhood he,—she honor'd, fair, and kind.

They say, that when Duke Guido saw them come
Bringing him thus, in that one dismal sum,
The whole amount of all for which his heart
Had sunk the father's in the schemer's part,
He rose, in private where he sate; and seem'd
As though he'd walk to them, like one that dream'd,
Right from the window, crying still "My child!"
And from that day thenceforth he never smiled.

On that same night, those lovers silently
Were buried in one grave, under a tree.
There, side by side, and hand in hand they lay,
In the green ground; and on fine nights in May
Young hearts betroth'd, used to go there, to pray.

CORSO AND EMILIA.

FRAGMENT OF THE STORY OF ANOTHER VICTIM TO PARENTAL DUPLICITY.[3]

1814.

* * * * * *

It has surpris'd me often, as I write,
How I, who have of late known small delight,
Should thus pursue a mournful theme, and make
My very solace of distress partake;
Now too, while rains autumnal, as I sing,
Wash the dull bars, chilling my sicklied wing,
And all the climate presses on my sense;[4]
But thoughts it furnishes of things far hence,
And leafy dreams afford me, and a feeling
Which I should else disdain, tear-dipp'd and healing;

And shows me, more than what it first design'd,
How little upon earth our home we find,
Or close th' intended course of erring humankind.

Sorrow, they say, to one with true-touch'd ear,
Is but the discord of a warbling sphere,
A lurking contrast, which though harsh it be,
Distils the next note more deliciously.
'Tis hard to think it, till the note be heard,
A joy too often and too long deferr'd.
Yet come it will, hereafter, if not here;
And good meantime comes best from many a tear.
Tales like the present, of a real woe,
From bitter seed to balmy fruitage grow:
The woes were few, were brief, have long been past;
The warnings they bequeath spread wide and last.
And even they, whose shatter'd hearts and frames
Make them unhappiest of poetic names,
What are they, if they know their calling high,
But crush'd perfumes exhaling to the sky?
Or weeping clouds, that but awhile are seen,
Yet keep the earth they haste to bright and green?

Three months have pass'd;—how pass'd, remains unknown;
But never now, companion'd or alone,
Comes the sweet lady to her summer bower.
Corso did once, arm'd with the sterner power
Of a man's grief. He saw it; but how look'd
The bow'r at *him!* His presence felt rebuk'd.
It seem'd as if the hopes of his young heart,
His kindness, and his generous scorn of art,
Had all been a fop's dream, or at the best
Poor weak half virtues that could stand no test,
And that on waking from his idle fit,
He found himself (how could he think of it!)
A selfish boaster, and a hypocrite.

That thought before had griev'd him, but the pain
Cut sharp and sudden, now it came again.
Sick thoughts of late had made his body sick,
And this, in turn, to them grown strangely quick;

And pale he stood, and seem'd to burst all o'er
Into moist anguish never felt before,
And with a dreadful certainty to know
His peace was gone, and all to come was woe;
Come too to her! doom'd, and by him, to bear,
In the dire lot, poor woman's direr share!—
It seem'd as if horrors thus heap'd must find
Some props, or they would crush his brain-sick mind:
And find they did, not what the worse disease
Of want of charity calls sophistries,—
Nor what can cure a generous heart of pain,—
But humble guesses, helping to sustain.
He thought of things, whose love we seldom heed,
Till sin or sorrow make the help a need,—
Of habit, circumstance, design, degree,
Merit, and will, and boundless charity;
And these, although they push'd down, as they rose,
His self-respect, and all those morning shows
Of true and perfect, which his youth had built,
Push'd with them too the worst of hopeless guilt;
Till youth, and natural vigour, and the dread
Of self-betrayal, and a thought that spread
From time to time in gladness o'er his face,
That sacrifice of self would earn them grace,
Help'd to restore him to his wonted life,
Though restless still, and with his looks at strife;
And he would rise betimes, day after day,
And greeting his blithe courser, ride away,
Seemingly blithe as he, gazing about
On tow'r and cot, to force his thoughts without;
And when he found it vain, would pierce the shade
Of some enwooded field or closer glade,
And there dismounting, idly sit, and sigh,
Or pluck the grass beside him with vague eye,
And almost envy the poor beast, that went
Cropping it, here and there, with dumb content.
But thus, at least, he exercis'd his blood,
And kept it livelier than inaction could;
And thus he earned for his thought-working head
The power of sleeping when he went to bed,

And was enabled still to wear away
That task of loaded hearts, another day.

But she, the gentler frame,—the shaken flower,—
The daughter, sacrificed in evil hour,—
The struggling, virtue-loving, fallen she,
Wife that still was, and mother that might be,—
What could she do, unable thus to keep
Her strength alive, but sit, and think, and weep,
Forever stooping o'er her broidery frame,
Half blind, and longing till the night-time came,
When worn and wearied out with the day's sorrow
She might be still and senseless till the morrow!

And oh, the morrow, how it used to rise!
How would she open her despairing eyes,
And from the sense of the long lingering day
Rushing upon her, almost turn away,
Loathing the light, and groan to sleep again!
Then sighing once for all, to meet the pain,
She would get up in haste, and try to pass
The time in patience, wretched as it was;
Till patience self, in her distemper'd sight,
Would seem a charm to which she had no right,
And trembling at the lip, and pale with fears,
She shook her head, and burst into fresh tears.
Old comforts now were not at her command:
The falcon stoop'd in vain to court her hand;
The flowers were not refresh'd; the very light,
The sunshine, seem'd as if it shone at night;
The least noise smote her like a sudden wound;
And did she hear but the remotest sound
Of song or instrument about the place,
She hid with both her hands her streaming face.
But worse to her than all (and oh! thought she,
That ever, ever, such a worse should be!)
The sight of infant was, or child at play;
Then would she turn, and move her lips, and pray,
That Heaven would take her, if it pleas'd, away.

Meantime her lord, who by her long distress
Seem'd wrought, at first, to some true tenderness,
Which, to his sore amaze, did but appear
To vex her more than when he was severe,
Began, with helps of wondering tongues, to see
In moods (he thought) so bent to disagree,
And in all else she look'd and said, and all
His brother did, who now in bower or hall
Seldom dar'd trust his still ingenuous face,—
The secret of a sure and dire disgrace.
What a convulsion was the first belief!
Astonishment, abasement, profound grief,
Self-pity, almost tears, thence self-disdain
For stooping to so weak and vile a pain,
With mad impatience to surmount the blow
In some retributive and bloody woe,—
All rush'd upon him, like the sudden view
Of some new world, foreign to all he knew,
Where he had wak'd and found the dreams of madmen true.

If any lingering hope that he was wrong,
Pride's self would needs hold fast, 'twas not so long.
One dawn, as sullenly awake he lay,
Considering what to do the approaching day;
He heard his wife say something in her sleep,—
He shook, and listened;—she began to weep,
And moaning louder, seem'd to shake her head,
Till all at once articulate, she said,
"He loves his brother yet.—Dear Heaven, 'twas I—"
Then lower voiced—"Only *do* let me die."

With the worst impulse of his whole fierce life
The husband glared, one moment, on his wife:
Then grasp'd a crucifix, and look'd no more.
He dresses, takes two swords, and through the door
Goes, like a spirit, in the morning air;—
His squire awak'd attends; and they repair,
Silent as wonder, to his brother's room:—
His squire calls him up too; and forth they come.

29891 0

The brothers meet,—Lorenzo scarce in breath,
Yet firm and fierce, Corso as pale as death.
The husband, motioning while turning round,
To lead the way, said, " To the tilting ground."
" *There*, brother," answer'd Corso, while despair
Rush'd on his face. " Yes, *brother*," cried he, " there."
The word smote crushingly; and paler still,
He bowed, and moved his lips, as waiting on his will.

'Twas a fresh autumn dawn, vigorous and chill;
The lightsome morning star was sparkling still,
Ere it turn'd in to heaven; and far away
Appear'd the streaky fingers of the day.
An opening in the trees took Corso's eye,
As mute his brother and himself went by:
It was a glimpse of the tall wooded mound
That screen'd Emilia's favourite spot of ground:
Massy and dark in the clear dawning stood,
As in a lingering sleep, the solemn wood;
And through the bowering arch, which led inside,
He almost fancied once, that he descried
A marble gleam, where the pavilion lay—
Starting he turn'd, and look'd another way.

Arriv'd, and waving the two squires apart,
Then pressing with his hand his labouring heart,
The Prince spoke low and close, (and as he spoke
His voice with breathless and pale passion broke,)
" Sleep hath reveal'd a villain," were his words:
Then gave his paler brother one of the two swords.

Corso's heart rose, exalted with despair;
He drew a little back; and with the air
Of one who would do well, not from the right
To be well thought of, but in guilt's despite,
Answer'd, " The sword is sheath'd. So rest it ever.
Misery's self shall fight no brother. Never."

" How!" with uplifted voice, exclaim'd the other;
" Hideous pretence! who bade you fight a brother?

Brother? O wretch! O traitor to the name!
Dash'd in thy teeth, and cursed be the claim.
What! wound it deepest? strike me to the core,
Me, and the hopes which I can have no more,
And then as never brother of mine could,
Shrink from the letting a few drops of blood?"

"It is not so," cried Corso, "'tis not so;
"But I would save you from a further woe."

"A further woe, recreant!" retorted he:
"What woe? what further? yes, one still may be!
Save me the woe, save me the dire disgrace,
Of seeing one of an illustrious race
Bearing about a heart, which fear'd no law,
And a vile sword, which yet he dared not draw."

"Brother, dear brother!" Corso cried, "nay, nay.
I'll use the word no more;—but *peace*, I pray!
You trample on a soul, sunk at your feet!"
"'Tis false!" exclaim'd the prince; "'tis a retreat
To which you fly, when manly wrongs pursue,
And fear the grave you bring a woman to."

With sudden start, and then with bow'd, meek look
Waiving the charge, yet not its worst rebuke,
Th' offender sigh'd; then rose without a word,
And drew, and kiss'd the cross'd hilt of his sword,
Looking to heaven;—then, with a steady brow,
Mild, yet not feeble, said, "I'm ready now."

"A noble word!" exclaim'd the prince, and smote
The ground beneath him with his firming foot:—
The squires rush in between, in their despair,
But both the princes tell them to beware.
"Back, Gerard," cries Lorenzo; "I require
"No teacher here, but an observant squire."
"Back, Tristan," Corso cries; "fear not for me;
"All is not worst that so appears to thee.

"And here," said he, "a word." The poor youth came,
Starting in sweeter tears to hear his name:
A whisper, and a charge there seem'd to be,
Giv'n to him kindly yet inflexibly:
Both squires then drew apart again, and stood
Mournfully both, each in his several mood,—
One half in rage, as to himself he speaks,
The other with the tears streaming down both his cheeks.

The prince attack'd with nerve in every limb,
Nor seem'd the other slow to match with him;
Yet as the fight grew warm, 'twas evident,
One only of the two on blood was bent:
Lorenzo press'd, and push'd, and shifted aim,
And play'd his weapon like a tongue of flame;
Corso retir'd, and warded, turn'd on heel,
And led him, step by step, round like a wheel;
Sometimes indeed he feign'd an angrier start,
But still relaps'd, and play'd his former part.

"What!" cried Lorenzo, who grew still more fierce,
"Fighting in sport? Playing your cart and tierce?"

"Not so, my prince," said Corso; "have a care
"How you think so, or I shall wound you there."
He stamp'd, and watching as he spoke the word,
Drove, with his breast, full on his brother's sword.

'Twas done. He stagger'd; and in falling prest
Lorenzo's foot with his right hand and breast:
Then on his elbow turn'd, and raising t'other,
He smil'd and said, "No fault of yours, my brother;
An accident—a slip—the finishing one
To errors by that poor old man begun.
You'll not—you'll not"—his heart leap'd on before,
And chok'd his utterance; but he smil'd once more,
For as his hand grew lax, he felt it prest;—
And so, his dim eyes sliding into rest,
He turn'd him round, and dropt with hiding head,
And in that loosening drop his spirit fled.

But noble passion touch'd Lorenzo's soul;
He seem'd to feel the clouds of habit roll
Away from him at once, with all their scorn,
And out he spoke, in the clear air of morn:—

"By heaven, by heaven, and all the better part
Of us poor creatures with a human heart,
I trust we reap at last, as well as plough;—
But there, meantime, my brother, liest thou:
And, Corso, thou wert the completest knight,
That ever rode with banner to the fight;
And thou wert the most beautiful to see,
That ever came in press of chivalry;
And of a sinful man, thou wert the best,
That ever for his friend put spear in rest;
And thou wert the most meek and cordial,
That ever among ladies ate in hall;
And thou wert still, for all that bosom gor'd,
The kindest man that ever struck with sword."

At this the words forsook his tongue; and he,
Who scarcely had shed tears since infancy,
Felt his stern visage thrill, and meekly bow'd
His head, and for his brother wept aloud.

The squires with glimmering tears—Tristan, at first,
Trying, with greedy search, to doubt the worst,
Double their scarfs about the fatal wound,
And lift the corse, and wait to quit the ground.
Lorenzo starts; and motioning to take
The way they came, follows his brother back,
And having seen him laid upon the bed,
No further look he gave him, nor tear shed,
But went away, such as he used to be,
With looks of stately will and calm austerity.

Tristan, who when he was to make the best
Of something sad and not to be redress'd,
Could show a heart as firm as it was kind,
Now lock'd his tears up, and seem'd all resign'd,

And to Emilia's chamber took his way,
To tell the message of that mortal day.
He found her ladies, up and down the stairs,
Moving with noiseless caution, and in tears,
And that the news, though to herself unknown,
On its old wings of vulgar haste had flown.
The door, as tenderly as miser's purse,
Was opened by the pale and aged nurse,
Who shaking her old head, and pressing close
Her wither'd lips to keep the tears that rose,
Made signs she guess'd what grief he came about,
And so his arm squeez'd gently, and went out.

The princess, who had pass'd a fearful night,
Toiling with dreams,—fright crowding upon fright,
Had miss'd her husband at that early hour,
And would have ris'n, but found she wanted power.
Yet as her body seem'd to go, her mind
Felt, though in anguish still, strangely resign'd;
And moving not, nor weeping, mute she lay,
Wasting in patient gravity away.
The nurse, sometime before, with gentle creep
Had drawn the curtains, hoping she might sleep:
But suddenly she ask'd, though not with fear,
"Nina, what bustle's that I seem to hear?"
And the poor creature, who the news had heard,
Pretending to be busy, had just stirr'd
Something about the room, and answer'd not a word.

"Who's there?" said that sweet voice, kindly and clear,
Which in its stronger days was joy to hear:—
Its weakness now almost depriv'd the squire
Of his new firmness, but approaching nigher,
"Madam," said he, "'tis I; one who may say,
He loves his friends more than himself to-day;—
Tristan."—She paus'd a little, and then said—
"Tristan, my friend, what noise thus haunts my head?
Something I'm sure has happen'd—tell me what—
I can bear all, though you may fancy not."
"Madam," replied the squire, "you are, I know,
All sweetness—pardon me for saying so.

My master bade me say then," resum'd he,
"That he spoke firmly when he told it me,—
That I was, also, madam, to your ear
Firmly to speak, and you firmly to hear,—
That he was forced this day, whether or no,
To combat with the prince; and that although
His noble brother was no fratricide,
Yet in that fight, and on his sword,—he died."

"I understand," with firmness answer'd she,
More low in voice, but still composedly.
"Now, Tristan—faithful friend—leave me; and take
This trifle here, and keep it for my sake."

So saying, from the curtains she put forth
Her thin white hand, that held a ring of worth;
And he, with tears no longer to be kept
From quenching his heart's thirst, silently wept,
And kneeling, took the ring, and touch'd her hand
To either streaming eye with homage bland,
And looking on it once, gently up started,
And in his reverent stillness so departed.

Her favourite lady then with the old nurse
Return'd, and fearing she must now be worse,
Gently withdrew the curtains, and look'd in:—
O, who that knows where faults may first begin,
Shall bid not earth be just, before 'tis hard, with sin?
There lay she praying, upwardly intent,
Like a fair statue on a monument,
With her two trembling hands together prest,
Palm against palm, and pointing from her breast,
She ceas'd; and turning slowly tow'rds the wall,
They saw her tremble sharply, feet and all,—
Then suddenly be still. Near and more near
They bent with pale inquiry and close ear;
Her eyes were shut—no motion—not a breath—
The gentle sufferer was at peace in death.

HERO AND LEANDER.

1818.

CANTO I.

Old is the tale I tell, and yet as young
And warm with life as ever minstrel sung:
Two lovers fill it,—two fair shapes—two souls.
Sweet as the last for whom the death-bell tolls:
What matters it how long ago, or where
They liv'd, or whether their young locks of hair,
Like English hyacinths, or Greek, were curl'd?
We hurt the stories of the antique world
By thinking of our school-books, and the wrongs
Done them by pedants and fantastic songs,
Or sculptures, which from Roman "studios" thrown,
Turn back Deucalion's flesh and blood to stone.
Truth is forever truth, and love is love;
The bird of Venus is the living dove.
Sweet Hero's eyes, three thousand years ago,
Were made precisely like the best we know,
Look'd the same looks, and spoke no other Greek
Than eyes of honey-moons begun last week.
Alas! and the dread shock that stunn'd her brow
Strain'd them as wide as any wretch's now.
I never think of poor Leander's fate,
And how he swam, and how his bride sat late,
And watch'd the dreadful dawning of the light,
But as I would of two that died last night.
So might they now have liv'd, and so have died;
The story's heart, to me, still beats against its side.

Beneath the sun which shines this very hour,
There stood of yore—behold it now—a tow'r,
Half set in trees and leafy luxury,
And through them look'd a window on the sea.
The tow'r is old, but guards a beauteous scene
Of bow'rs, 'twixt purple hills, a gulf of green,
Whose farthest side, from out a lifted grove,
Shows a white temple to the Queen of Love.

Fair is the morn, the soft trees kiss and breathe;
Calm, blue, and glittering is the sea beneath;
And by the window a sweet maiden sits,
Grave with glad thoughts, and watching it by fits,
For o'er that sea, drawn to her with delight,
Her love Leander is to come at night;
To come, not sailing, or with help of oar,
But with his own warm heart and arms—no more—
A naked bridegroom, bound from shore to shore.

A priestess Hero is, an orphan dove,
Lodg'd in that turret of the Queen of Love;
A youth Leander, borne across the strait,
Whose wealthy kin deny him his sweet mate,
Beset with spies, and dogg'd with daily spite;
But he has made high compact with delight,
And found a wondrous passage through the weltering night.

So sat she fix'd all day, or now was fain
To rise and move, then sighs, then sits again;
Then tries some work, forgets it, and thinks on,
Wishing with perfect love the time were gone,
And lost to the green trees with their sweet singers,
Taps on the casement's ledge with idle fingers.

An aged nurse had Hero in the place,
An under priestess of an humbler race,
Who partly serv'd, partly kept watch and ward
Over the rest, but no good love debarr'd.
The temple's faith though serious, never cross'd
Engagements, miss'd to their exchequer's cost;
And though this present knot was to remain
Unknown awhile, 'twas bless'd within the fane,
And much good thanks expected in the end
From the dear married daughter, and the wealthy friend.
Poor Hero look'd for no such thanks. Her hand,
But to be held in his, would have giv'n sea and land.

The reverend crone accordingly took care
To do her duty to a time so fair,

Saw all things right, secur'd her own small pay,
(Which brought her luxuries to her dying day,)
And finishing a talk, which with surprise
She saw made grave e'en those good-humour'd eyes,
Laid up, tow'rds night, her service on the shelf,
And left her nicer mistress to herself.

Hesper meanwhile, the star with amorous eye,
Shot his fine sparkle from the deep blue sky.
A depth of night succeeded, dark, but clear,
Such as presents the hollow starry sphere,
Like a high gulf to heaven; and all above
Seems waking to a fervid work of love.
A nightingale, in transport, seem'd to fling
His warble out, and then sit listening:
And ever and anon, amidst the flush
Of the thick leaves, there ran a breezy gush;
And then, from dewy myrtles lately bloom'd,
An odour small, in at the window fumed.

At last, with twinkle o'er a distant tower,
A star appear'd that was to show the hour.
The virgin saw; and going to a room
Which held an altar burning with perfume,
Cut off a lock of her dark solid hair,
And laid it, with a little whisper'd prayer,
Before a statue, that of marble bright
Sat smiling downwards o'er the rosy light.
Then at the flame a torch of pine she lit,
And o'er her head anxiously holding it,
Ascended to the roof; and leaning there,
Lifted its light into the darksome air.

The boy beheld,—beheld it from the sea,
And parted his wet locks, and breath'd with glee,
And rose, in swimming, more triumphantly.

Smooth was the sea that night, the lover strong,
And in the springy waves he danc'd along.
He rose, he dipp'd his breast, he aim'd, he cut
With his clear arms, and from before him put

The parting waves, and in and out the air
His shoulders felt, and trail'd his washing hair;
But when he saw the torch, oh, how he sprung,
And thrust his feet against the waves, and flung
The foam behind, as though he scorn'd the sea,
And parted his wet locks, and breath'd with glee,
And rose, and panted, most triumphantly!

Arriv'd at last on shallow ground, he saw
The stooping light, as if in haste, withdraw:
Again it issued just above the door,
With a white hand, and vanish'd as before.
Then rising, with a sudden-ceasing sound
Of wateriness, he stood on the firm ground,
And treading up a little slippery bank,
With jutting myrtles mix'd, and verdure dank,
Came to a door ajar,—all hush'd, all blind
With darkness; yet he guess'd who stood behind;
And entering with a turn, the breathless boy
A breathless welcome finds, and words that die for joy.

CANTO II.

Thus pass'd the summer shadows in delight:
Leander came as surely as the night,
And when the morning woke upon the sea,
It saw him not, for back at home was he.
Sometimes, when it blew fresh, the struggling flare
Seem'd out; but then he knew his Hero's care,
And that she only wall'd it with her cloak;
Brighter again from out the dark it broke.
Sometimes the night was almost clear as day,
Wanting no torch; and then, with easy play,
He dipp'd along beneath the silver moon,
Placidly heark'ning to the water's tune.
The people round the country, who from far
Used to behold the light, thought it a star,
Set there perhaps by Venus as a wonder,
To mark the favourite maiden who slept under.

Therefore they trod about the grounds by day
Gently; and fishermen at night, they say,
With reverence kept aloof, cutting their silent way.

But autumn now was over; and the crane
Began to clang against the coming rain,
And peevish winds ran cutting o'er the sea,
Which oft return'd a face of enmity.
The gentle girl, before he went away,
Would look out sadly toward the cold-eyed day
And often beg him not to come that night;
But still he came, and still she bless'd his sight;
And so, from day to day, he came and went,
Till time had almost made her confident.

One evening, as she sat, twining sweet bay
And myrtle garlands for a holiday,
And watch'd at intervals the dreary sky,
In which the dim sun held a languid eye,
She thought with such a full and quiet sweetness
Of all Leander's love and his completeness,
All that he was, and said, and look'd, and dared,
His form, his step, his noble head full-hair'd,
And how she lov'd him, as a thousand might,
And yet he earn'd her still thus night by night,
That the sharp pleasure mov'd her like a grief,
And tears came dropping with their meek relief.

Meantime the sun had sunk; the hilly mark,
Across the straits, mix'd with the mightier dark,
And night came on. All noises by degrees
Were hush'd,—the fisher's call, the birds, the trees,
All but the washing of the eternal seas.

Hero look'd out, and trembling augur'd ill,
The darkness held its breath so very still.
But yet she hop'd he might arrive before
The storm began, or not be far from shore;
And crying, as she stretch'd forth in the air,
"Bless him!" she turn'd and said a tearful prayer,
And mounted to the tower, and shook the torch's flare.

But he, Leander, almost half across,
Threw his blithe locks behind him with a toss,
And hail'd the light victoriously, secure
Of clasping his kind love, so sweet and sure;
When suddenly, a blast, as if in wrath,
Sheer from the hills, came headlong on his path,
Then started off; and driving round the sea,
Dashed up the panting waters roaringly.
The youth at once was thrust beneath the main,
With blinded eyes, but quickly rose again,
And with a smile at heart, and stouter pride,
Surmounted like a god, the rearing tide.
But what? The torch gone out! So long too! See,
He thinks it comes! Ah, yes,—'tis she! 'tis she!
Again he springs; and though the winds arise
Fiercer and fiercer, swims with ardent eyes;
And always, though with ruffian waves dash'd hard,
Turns thither with glad groan his stout regard;
And always, though his sense seems wash'd away,
Emerges, fighting tow'rds the cordial ray.

But driven about at last, and drench'd the while,
The noble boy loses that inward smile:
For now, from one black atmosphere, the rain
Sweeps into stubborn mixture with the main;
And the brute wind, unmuffling all its roar,
Storms;—and the light, gone out, is seen no more.

Then dreadful thoughts of death, of waves heap'd on him,
And friends, and parting daylight, rush upon him.
He thinks of prayers to Neptune and his daughters,
And Venus, Hero's queen, sprung from the waters;
And then of Hero only,—how she fares,
And what she'll feel, when the blank morn appears;
And at that thought he stiffens once again
His limbs, and pants, and strains, and climbs,—in vain.
Fierce draughts he swallows of the wilful wave,
His tossing hands are lax, his blind look grave,

Till the poor youth (and yet no coward he)
Spoke once her name, and yielding wearily,
Wept in the middle of the scornful sea.

I need not tell how Hero, when her light
Would burn no longer, pass'd that dreadful night;
How she exclaim'd, and wept, and could not sit
One instant in one place; nor how she lit
The torch a hundred times, and when she found
'Twas all in vain, her gentle head turn'd round
Almost with rage; and in her fond despair
She tried to call him through the deafening air.

But when he came not,—when from hour to hour
He came not,—though the storm had spent its power,
And when the casement, at the dawn of light,
Began to show a square of ghastly white,
She went up to the tower, and straining out
To search the seas, downwards, and round about,
She saw, at last,—she saw her lord indeed
Floating, and wash'd about, like a vile weed;
On which such strength of passion and dismay
Seiz'd her, and such an impotence to stay,
That from the turret, like a stricken dove,
With fluttering arms she leap'd, and join'd her drowned love.

THE PANTHER.[5]

1818.

The panther leap'd to the front of his lair,
And stood with a foot up, and snuff'd the air;
He quiver'd his tongue from his panting mouth,
And look'd with a yearning towards the south;
For he scented afar in the coming breeze
News of the gums and their blossoming trees;
And out of Armenia that same day
He and his race came bounding away.

" With fluttering arms she leap'd, and join'd her drowned love—"

Hero and Leander. P. 50

Over the mountains and down to the plains
Like Bacchus's panthers with wine in their veins,
They came where the woods wept odorous rains;
And there, with a quivering, every beast
Fell to his old Pamphylian feast.

The people who liv'd not far away,
Heard the roaring on that same day;
And they said, as they lay in their carpeted rooms,
"The panthers are come, and are drinking the gums;"
And some of them going with swords and spears
To gather their share of the rich round tears,
The panther I spoke of follow'd them back;
And dumbly they let him tread close in the track,
And lured him after them into the town;
And then they let the portcullis down,
And took the panther, which happened to be
The largest was seen in all Pamphily.

By every one there was the panther admir'd,
So fine was his shape and so sleekly attir'd,
And such an air, both princely and swift,
He had, when giving a sudden lift
To his mighty paw, he'd turn at a sound,
And so stand panting and looking around,
As if he attended a monarch crown'd.
And truly, they wonder'd the more to behold
About his neck a collar of gold,
On which was written, in characters broad,
"Arsaces the king to the Nysian God."
So they tied to the collar a golden chain,
Which made the panther a captive again,
And by degrees he grew fearful and still,
As though he had lost his lordly will.

But now came the spring, when free-born love
Calls up nature in forest and grove,
And makes each thing leap forth, and be
Loving, and lovely, and blithe as he.
The panther he felt the thrill of the air,
And he gave a leap up, like that at his lair;

He felt the sharp sweetness more strengthen his veins
Ten times than ever the spicy rains,
And ere they're aware, he has burst his chains:
He has burst his chains, and ah, ha! he's gone,
And the links and the gazers are left alone,
And off to the mountains the panther's flown.

Now what made the panther a prisoner be?
Lo! 'twas the spices and luxury.
And what set that lordly panther free?
'Twas Love!—'twas Love!—'twas no one but he.

MAHMOUD.[6]

1823.

TO RICHARD HENRY HORNE.

HORNE, hear a theme that should have had its dues
From thine own passionate and thoughtful Muse.

THERE came a man, making his hasty moan
Before the Sultan Mahmoud on his throne,
And crying out—"My sorrow is my right,
And I *will* see the Sultan, and to-night."
"Sorrow," said Mahmoud, "is a reverend thing:
I recognise its right, as king with king;
Speak on." "A fiend has got into my house,"
Exclaim'd the staring man, "and tortures us:
One of thine officers;—he comes, the abhorr'd,
And takes possession of my house, my board,
My bed:—I have two daughters and a wife,
And the wild villain comes, and makes me mad with life."

"Is he there now?" said Mahmoud:—"No; he left
The house when I did, of my wits bereft;
And laugh'd me down the street, because I vow'd
I'd bring the prince himself to lay him in his shroud,

I'm mad with want, I'm mad with misery,
And oh, thou Sultan Mahmoud, God cries out for thee!"

The Sultan comforted the man, and said,
"Go home, and I will send thee wine and bread,"
(For he was poor), "and other comforts. Go;
And should the wretch return, let Sultan Mahmoud know."

In two days' time, with haggard eyes and beard,
And shaken voice, the suitor reappear'd,
And said "He's come."—Mahmoud said not a word,
But rose, and took four slaves, each with a sword,
And went with the vex'd man. They reach the place,
And hear a voice, and see a female face,
That to the window flutter'd in affright.
"Go in," said Mahmoud, "and put out the light;
But tell the females first to leave the room;
And when the drunkard follows them, we come."

The man went in. There was a cry, and hark!
A table falls, the window is struck dark;
Forth rush the breathless women; and behind
With curses comes the fiend in desperate mind.
In vain: the sabres soon cut short the strife,
And chop the shrieking wretch, and drink his bloody life.

"Now *light* the light," the Sultan cried aloud.
'Twas done; he took it in his hand, and bow'd
Over the corpse, and look'd upon the face;
Then turn'd and knelt beside it in the place,
And said a prayer, and from his lips there crept
Some gentle words of pleasure, and he wept.

In reverent silence the spectators wait,
Then bring him at his call both wine and meat;
And when he had refresh'd his noble heart,
He bade his host be blest, and rose up to depart.

The man amaz'd, all mildness now, and tears,
Fell at the Sultan's feet, with many prayers,

And begg'd him to vouchsafe to tell his slave,
The reason first of that command he gave
About the light; then when he saw the face,
Why he knelt down; and lastly, how it was,
That fare so poor as his detain'd him in the place.

The Sultan said, with much humanity,
" Since first I saw thee come, and heard thy cry,
I could not rid me of a dread, that one
By whom such daring villanies were done,
Must be some lord of mine, perhaps a lawless son.
Whoe'er he was, I knew my task, but fear'd
A father's heart, in case the worst appear'd.
For this I had the light put out. But when
I saw the face, and found a stranger slain,
I knelt and thank'd the sovereign arbiter,
Whose work I had perform'd through pain and fear;
And then I rose, and was refresh'd with food,
The first time since thou cam'st, and marr'dst my solitude."

THE GENTLE ARMOUR;

OR,

THREE KNIGHTS IN STEEL AGAINST ONE IN LINEN.

1831.

THE main circumstance of this story—a knight fighting against three, with no other coat of mail than the delicatest garment of his mistress—is taken from one of the Fabliaux that were versified by the late Mr. Way. The lady's appearance in the garment, after the battle, is from the same poem. The turn given to these incidents, the colouring, and the sentiment, are the work of the present writer. The original is a curious specimen of the license of old times. A married woman, who has a good-humoured craven for her husband, is made love to by three knights; to each of whom, as a trial of his affection, and by way of proving the tenderness of her deserts, she proposes that he shall mix in the fight of a tournament, with no other covering to his body than the one just mentioned Two of them decline the experiment; the third accepts it, is victorious, and, in order to be on a par with her in delicacy of sentiment, requests that she will make her appearance at her husband's table in the triumphant investment. She does so; the guests are struck with admiration;

" While the good sponse (not bold, 'twas lately sung)
Cast down his honest eyes, and held his tongue.

" Speak, guileless damsels! Dames, in love well read!
Speak, Sirs! in chivalry and honour bred;
Who best deserves—the lady or the knight?
He death who braved, or she, censorious spite?"

Allowance is to be made for the opinions of a different age; and we see, even here, right and wrong principles struggling in the perplexities of custom. But the cultivation of brute force is uppermost; and nothing can reconcile us to the disposition of the woman who could speculate upon such a tribute to her vanity. It is hoped that the heroine of the following version of the story, without being wanting in self-love, is a little better, and not unsuited to any age.

It has been thought by some persons (and I am ashamed for their sakes, not for my own, to say it) that the leading subject of the poem, a shift, is unfit for relation! In the name of common sense and modesty, on what ground? I confess I should think very ill of any mind, not perverted in its ideas by the worst kind of town life, that could entertain so unworthy a fancy. Most assuredly I wrote for no such persons, but for the innocent, the noble, and the wise. I certainly, especially after such warning, would not read the poem to everybody. I would not have read it, for instance, had I lived in their days, to the club-rooms of Tom Brown and Tom D'Urfey; and I might have had doubts of the audiences of Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Centlivre; but I could have read it with pleasure (*literary* modesty apart) to Addison and Steele, to Atterbury and Berkeley, to their wives and to their daughters. I would have said nothing about the story in the circles of King Charles the Second, male or female; nothing to the Buckinghams and Rochesters, or the Duchesses of Cleveland and Portsmouth; but I would have repeated it without hesitation to Cowley, to Evelyn, to Andrew Marvel, to Milton himself, and to every woman whom they respected;—to Lady Fanshawe, and to Lucy Hutchinson. " No thought infirm," I would be sworn, would have " altered *their* cheek." They would have thought of nothing but the sentiment, and virtues, and nobleness of the story. With those only would cheeks like theirs have glowed.

Of some imaginable living readers, equally refined, it does not become me to speak; but I may add, that " those poor, noble, wounded, and sick men," who are suffering for us in the East, would find the achievements, and probably the affections of the story, too much like some of their own to disrespect them: nor do I believe it would be despised even by the divine women who have gone to pour balm into their wounds.

CANTO I.

A LADY'S gift I sing, which meant in blame,
His glorious hauberk to a knight became,
And in the field such dire belabouring bore,
As gentle armour never stood before;
A song of love, fit for the purest ears,
With smiles begun and clos'd, and manhood in the tears.

There liv'd a knight, when knighthood was in flow'r,
Who charm'd alike the tilt-yard and the bow'r;
Young, handsome, blythe, loyal and brave of course,
He stuck as firmly to his friend as horse;
And only show'd, for so complete a youth,
Somewhat too perfect a regard for truth.
He own'd 'twas inconvenient; sometimes felt
A wish 'twere buckled in another's belt;
Doubted its modesty, its use, its right,
Yet after all remain'd the same true knight:
So potent is a custom early taught;
And to such straits may honest men be brought.

'Tis true, to be believ'd was held a claim
Of gentle blood, and not to be, a shame:—
A liar, notorious as the noonday sun,
Was bound to fight you, if you call'd him one:—
But yet to be so nice, and stand, profess'd,
All truth, was held a pedantry at best;
Invidious by the men; and by the fair
A thing at once to dote on and beware.
What bliss to meet his flatteries, eye to eye!
But could he not, then, tell one little lie?

At length, our hero found, to take his part,
A lovely girl, a quick and virgin heart,
One that believ'd what any friend averr'd,
Much more the whisp'rer of earth's sweetest word.
He lov'd her for her cordial, trusting ways,
Her love of love, and readiness to praise;
And she lov'd him because he told her so,
And truth makes true love doubly sweet to know.

It chanc'd this lady in relation stood
To one as beautiful, but not so good,
Who had been blaz'd, for what indeed she was,
By a young lord, over his hippocras,[7]
Her lover once, but now so far from tender,
He swore he'd kick her very least defender.

The world look'd hard for some one of her kin
To teach this spark to look to his own skin;
But no one came: the lady wept for spite:
At length her cousin ask'd it of the knight.

The knight look'd troubled to the last degree,
Turn'd pale, then red, but said it could not be.
With many sighs he said it, many pray'rs
To be well construed—nay, at last with tears:
And own'd a knight might possibly be better,
Who read the truth less nicely to the letter;
But 'twas his weakness—'twas his education,—
A dying priest had taught him, his relation,
A kind of saint, who meant him for the church,
And thus had left his breeding in the lurch;
The good old man! he lov'd him, and took blame
(He own'd it) thus to mix his love with shame:
"But oh reflect, my sweet one," cried the youth,
"How you yourself have lov'd me for my truth;
How I love you for loving it, and how
Secure it makes us of our mutual vow.
To feel this hand, to look into those eyes,—
It makes me feel as sure as of the earth and skies."

"I did love, and I do," the lady cried,
With hand but half allow'd, and cheek aside;
"But then I thought you took me at my word,
And would have scorn'd what I pronounc'd absurd.
My cousin's wrong'd; I'm sure of it; do you
Be sure as well, and show what you can do:
Let but one mind be seen betwixt us two."

In vain our hero, while his aspect glow'd
To hear these lovely words, the difference show'd
'Twixt her kind wishes and an ill desert:
The more he talk'd, the more her pride was hurt,
Till rais'd from glow to glow, and tear to tear,
And pique to injury, she spoke of fear.

"Fear!" cried the knight, blushing because he blush'd,
While sorrow through his gaze in wonder rush'd;

" Had I been present when this lord was heard,
I might perhaps have stopp'd him with a word;
One word (had I suspected it) to show
How ignorant you were of what all know;
And with what passion you could take the part
Of one, unworthy of your loving heart:
But when I know the truth, and know that he
Knew not, nor thought, of either you or me,
And when I'm call'd on, and in open day,
To swear that true is false, and yea is nay,
And know I'm in a lie, and yet go through it,
By all that's blest I own I cannot do it.
Let me but feel me buckled for the right,
And come a world in arms, I'm still a knight:
But give my foe the truth, and me the fraud,
And the pale scholar of the priest is awed."

" Say not the word," the hasty fair one cried:
" I see it all, and wish I might have died.
Go, Sir, oh go! a soldier and afraid!
Was it for this you lov'd a trusting maid?
Your presence kills me, Sir, with shame and grief."—
She said; and sunk in tears and handkerchief.

" Ah, Mabel," said the knight, as with a kiss
He bow'd on her dropp'd head, " you'll mourn for this."
He look'd upon her glossy locks, admir'd
Their gentleness for once, and with a sigh retir'd.

From day to day Sir Hugh has paced his floor,
Look'd out of window, listen'd at the door,
Wrote twice; wrote thrice; learnt of her health; took up
His lute, his book; fill'd, and forgot, a cup;
Tried all but pride, and found no comfort still:
Lov'd him she had, but more had loved her will.

It chanc'd a short time after, that the king
Proclaim'd a joust at the return of spring:
The suburb was all hammers, boards, and crowd;
The knights and tailors pleas'd, the ladies proud;
All but our hero, and the cousins twain,
Who nurs'd their several sullenness of pain,

And tore in secret much their mental hair;
The ladies that they had no lovers there,
The gentle knight in amorous despair.
The lord who had denounc'd the light one's name,
Seeing no step to vindicate her fame,
And hearing of her cousin's broken vow,
Would laugh, and lift his shoulders and his brow,
And talk of tricks that run in families;
And then he'd lift his glass, and looking wise,
Drink to the health of "Truth betwixt two Lies."
Two fluster'd fools, though brave, and men of birth,
There were, who join'd in this unseemly mirth;
Fellows who knew, and knew it to their shame,
The worth of one, and chaff of t'other dame.
These clubb'd their jealousies, revenge, and spite,
Till broad the scandal grew, and reach'd the knight.

Our lover heard with mingled rage and joy,
Then rose from out his grief, and call'd his boy,
(A pretty page with letter-bearing face,)
And wrote his mistress to implore her grace;
Her grace and pardon to implore, and some
Small favour for the battle, now to come,—
A glove, a string, aught but a cruel No,
To plume his next day's pounce upon the foe.
The page returns with doubt upon his eyes,
And brings a packet which his lord unties.
"My lady wrote not, saw me not," he said,
"But sends that answer to the note instead."
"This string," exclaims the knight,—"Cut it." They lift
A lid of pasteboard, and behold——a shift!

CANTO II.

"Now whether shame she means me, or my bliss,"
The knight he cries, "thank her for this, for this!"
And as he spoke, he smother'd up a kiss:—
"To-morrow sees me panoplied indeed,
And blessed be the thought shall clasp me while I bleed!"

Next day the lists are set, the trumpets blown,
And grace requested for a knight unknown.
Who summons, and to mortal fight defies,
Three lordly knights for most unlordly calumnies.
What calumnies they are, he need not tell;
Their names and consciences will serve as well.
The names are then resounded through the place,
And tow'rds the entrance turns the universal face.

With scorn and rage the sturdy gallants hear,
And ask what madman wants a sepulchre;
But when the stranger, with his face unshown,
Rides in, accoutred in a shift alone,
(For on his trunk at least was naught beside)
The doubtful laughter in amazement died.
'Twas clear the champion would be drench'd with wounds,
Yet see how calm he rides the accustom'd rounds.
His mould is manly as the lawn is frail,
A shield is on his arm, his legs and thighs in mail;—
The herald's laws forbid a wounded steed;—
All strain their eyes, and on the shift they read,
Written in black, and answering to the part
The motto spoke of, "It has touch'd her heart."

To admiration deep th' amazement turns,
The dumbness to discourse, which deeply burns;
Till the four parties to their posts fall in,
And soft eyes dazzle, ere the blows begin.

No stint or measure in his gallantry
The stranger knew; but took at once all three:
The trumpets blew their blast of bloody weather,
The swords are out, the warriors rush together,
And with such bulk and tempest comes the knight,
One of the three is overborne outright,
Saddle and man, and snaps his wrist. The wretch
Proclaims his rage and torture in a screech.
The three had thought to save the shift, and bring
The wearer down, for laughter to the king:
But seeing what they see, and both on fire
To reach him first, they turn and charge in ire,

And mix the fight; and such a storm succeeds
Of clatt'ring shields, and helms, and hurtling steeds,
With such a toil pell-mell, now that, now this,
Above, beneath, and rage of hit and miss,
And horses half on ground, or staring high,
And crouching skill, and trampling sov'reignty,
That never was beheld a sight so fit
To baffle and turn pale the gazer's wit.
Nathless such skill the marv'llous knight display'd,
The shift some time was spotless as the maid;
Till a great gush proclaiming blood was drawn,
Redder and redder grew the dainty lawn,
And drench'd and dripping, not a thread there stood,
But what was bath'd in his benignant blood.
Sudden he turn'd; and whirling like a wheel,
In both their teeth sent round the whistling steel;
Then with a jovial wrist, he flash'd it down,
And cleft the right man's shoulder to the bone;
Who fell, and like the first was borne aside:
"Is it a devil, or a saint?" they cried:
A tenderer murmur midst the ladies ran:
With tears they bless'd "the angel of a man."

The gallant lord was now the only foe,
And fresh he seem'd: the knight could not be so;
In that last blow his strength must have been summ'd;
His arm appears unhing'd, his brain benumb'd;
And as the sword seems carving him to death,
At ev'ry gash the crowd draw in their breath.
Sudden the blades are snapp'd; the clubs of steel
Are call'd; the stranger is observ'd to reel;
Then grasps with both his hands the saddle-bow,
And bends for breath; the people cry "No! No!"
And all the court unconsciously arise:
The ladies on the king turn weeping eyes,
And manly pray'rs are mix'd with sobs and cries.
The monarch was about to part the fight,
When, his club brought, sore passion seized the knight,
Who grasp'd it, rais'd it like an iron frown,
And rising in his stirrups, sent it down:

It met the other's, taking heavier pains,
And dash'd it, club and helmet, in his brains.
A stifled shriek is heard, the victim falls,
The victor too: "Help! Help!" the monarch calls;
A shout, half terror, shakes the suburb walls.

His helm unloos'd, they recognize the face
Of the best knight that ever bore disgrace,
Now seeming dead, and gone to his long rest
In comfort cold of that hard-hearted vest.
The loveliest ladies kiss him as he lay,
Then watch the leech, who cuts his vest away,
And clears his wounds. The weeping dames prepare
Linen and balms, and part his forlorn hair,
And let upon his face the blessed air.

Meanwhile the tidings to his mistress come,
Who clasps her hands and for a while is dumb;
Then owns the secret why the shift was sent,
But said he far exceeded what she meant.
Pale and despairing to the spot she flies,
Where in his death-like rest her lover lies,
And prays to be let in:—they let her in:
She sees his hands laid straight, and his pale chin,
Nor dares advance to look upon his face,
Till round her come the ladies in the place,
Who comfort her, and say she must complete
The cure, and set her in the nurse's seat.

All day she watch'd, all night, and all next day,
And scarcely turn'd her face, except to pray,
Till the third morn; when, breathing with a moan,
And feeling the soft hand that clasp'd his own,
He woke, and saw the face that had not ceas'd
To haunt his thoughts, in forest or at feast,
Visibly present, sweet with begging fears,
And eyes that lov'd him through remorseful tears.
Ah! love is a soft thing; and strongest eyes
Might answer, as his did, with wells of balmy rise.

What need I say? a loitering cure is his,
But full of sweets, and precious memories,
And whispers, laden from the land of bliss.
Sir Hugo with the lark has left his bed;
'Tis June; 'tis lover's month; in short, they wed.
But how? like other people, you suppose,
In silks and state, as all good story goes.
The bridegroom did, and never look'd so well,
Not e'en when in the shift he fought pell-mell;
But the fair bride, instead of things that bless
Wedding-day eyes, display'd a marvellous dress,—
Marvellous, and homely, and in open sight;
The people were so mov'd, they wept outright.

For lo! with hair let loose about her ears,
And taper in her hand the fair appears,
And naked feet, a rosy saint at shrift,
And round her bosom hangs the ruddy shift:
Tatter'd it hangs, all cut and carv'd to rags;
Not fairer droop, when the great organ drags
Its thunders forth, a church's hundred flags.
With glimmering tears she hastens to his feet,
And kneels to kiss them in the public street,
Then takes his hand, and ere she will arise,
Entreats for pardon at his gracious eyes;
And hopes he will not scorn her love for life,
As his most humble and most honour'd wife.

Awhile her lord, with manly deference stood
Wrapt in the sweetness of that angel mood;
Then stoop'd, and on her brow his soul impress'd,
And at the altar thus the bride was dress'd.

THE PALFREY.

1842.

THE following story is a variation of one of the most amusing of the old French narrative poems that preceded the time of Chaucer, with additions of the writer's invention. The original, which he did not see till it was completed, is to be found in the collection of Messrs. Barbazan and Méon, (*Fabliaux et Contes des Poëtes François des* 11, 12, 13, 14, *et* 15^e *Siècles*, &c. Edition 1808.) His own originals were the prose abridgment of M. Le Grand (*Fabliaux*, &c., third edition, volume the fourth,) and its imitation in verse by Messrs. Way and Ellis, inserted in the latter's notes to the select translations from Le Grand by the former of those gentlemen.

The scene of the old story,—the only known production of a poet named Huon le Roi (possibly one of the "Kings of the Minstrels," often spoken of at that period,)—is laid in the province of Champagne; but as almost all the narrative poems under the title of *Lays* (of which this is one) are with good reason supposed to have had their source in the Greater or Lesser Britain—that is to say, either among the Welsh of this island, or their cousins of French Brittany, and as the only other local allusions in the poem itself are to places in England, the author has availed himself of the common property in these effusions claimed for the Anglo-Norman Muse,

"Begirt with British and Armorick knights,"

to indulge in a license universal with the old minstrels, and lay the scene of his version where and when he pleased; to wit, during the reign of Edward the First, and in Kensington, Hendon, and their neighbourhoods,—old names, however new they sound. There is reason to believe, that the woody portions of Kensington, still existing as the Gardens, and in the neighbourhood of Holland House, are part of the ancient forest of Middlesex, which extended from this quarter to the skirts of Hertfordshire: and it is out of regard for these remnants of the old woods, and associations with them still more grateful, that he has placed the scene of his heroine's abode on the site of the existing palace, and the closing scene of the poem in the hall of the De Veres, Earls of Oxford, who are supposed to have had a mansion at that period in the grounds of the present Holland House, near the part called the Moats.

PART FIRST.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes,
Merrily well the palfrey goes;
He carrieth laughters, he carrieth woes,
Yet merrily ever the palfrey goes.

'Tis June, and a bright sun burneth all,
Sir William hath gallop'd from Hendon Hall
To Kensington, where in a thick old wood
(Now its fair Gardens) a mansion stood,

Half like fortress, and half like farm,
A house which had ceas'd to be threaten'd with harm.
The gates frown'd still, for the dignity's sake,
With porter, portcullis, and bit of a lake;
But ivy caress'd their warm old ease,
And the young rooks chuckled across the trees,
And burning below went the golden bees.
The spot was the same, where on a May morn
The Rose that toppeth the world was born.

Sir William hath gallop'd, and well was bent
His palfrey to second a swift intent;
And yet, having come, he delayeth his knock,
E'en though a sweet maiden counteth the clock
Till she meet his eye from behind the chair,
Where sitteth Sir Guy with his old white hair.
But the youth is not rich; and day by day
Sir Guy groweth cold, and hath less to say,
And daunteth his wit with *haws* and *hums*,
Coughing with grandeur, and twirling his thumbs,
Till visiting turneth to shame and gall,
And Sir William must speak what endangereth all.

Now for any deed else, in love or in war,
Knight bolder was none than the knight De la Barre
(So styled by the king, from a traitor tall,
Whom he pitch'd over barriers, armour and all);
Short distance made he betwixt point and hilt;
He was not a man that at tourney and tilt
Sat bowing to every fair friend he could spy,
Or bearing his fame with a fine cold eye;
A hundred sweet eyes might be watching his own;
He thought but of two, and of steeds to be thrown;
And the trumpets no sooner blew mights to mights,
Than crash went his onset and down went knights.

And thus in his love for sweet Anne de Paul,
Though forc'd to some stealths, 'twas honest withal:
He wooed, though the old man ever was by,
With talk such as fixeth a maiden's eye,

With lore and with legends, earnest of heart,
And an art that applied them, sprung out of no art,
Till stealth for his sake seem'd truth's own right,
And at an old casement long clos'd, one night,
Through boughs never dry, in a pathless nook,
Love's breathless delight in his vows she took.
Ah! never thenceforth, by sunniest brook,
Did the glittering cherry-trees beat the look
Of the poor-growing stems in the pathless nook.

But, alas! to plead love unto loving eyes,
And to beg for its leave of the worldly wise,
All humility sweet on the one side lies,
And all on the other that mortifies.

Sir William hath swallow'd a sigh at last,
Big as his heart, and the words have pass'd:
"I love your daughter, Sir Guy," quoth he,
"And though I'm not rich, yet my race may be;
A race with a scutcheon as old as the best,
Though its wealth lies at Acre in holy rest.
Mine uncle, your friend, so blithe and old,
Hath nobody nigher to leave his gold:
The king hath been pleas'd to promise my sword
The picking of some great Frenchman's hoard;
And sire, meantime, should not blush for wife;
Soft as her hand should fare her life;
My rents, though small, can support her state,
And I'd fight for the rest till I made them great.
Vouchsafe to endure that I seek her love:
I know she resembles the blest above;
Her face would paint sweeter a monarch's bower,
Though glory and grace were in every flower:
But angels on monarchs themselves look down,
And love is to love both coffer and crown."

Sir William ended, he scarce knew why,
(But 'twas pity of self, to move pity thereby,)
With a sad, perchance with an abject sigh,
And stoop'd and kiss'd the hand of Sir Guy:
Steady and sharp was the old man's eye.

"Sir William, no doubt, is a bold young knight,"
Quoth he, "and my daughter a beauty bright;
And a beauty bright and a bold young man
Have suited, I wot, since the world began.
But the man that is bold and hath money beside,
Cometh best arm'd for a beauteous bride.
The court will be riding this way next week,
To honour the earl's fat chimney reek;
And softly will many a bold bright eye
Fall on the face no face comes nigh.
You speak of mirth, and you speak of age,
Not in a way very civil or sage.
Your kinsman, the friend whom you call so old,
But ten years less than myself hath told:
And I count not this body so ancient still,
As to warrant green years to talk of my will.
Let him come if he please (I shall greet the friend)
And show me which way his post-obits tend,
And then we can parley of courtings best;
Till when, I advise you to court his chest."

Sir William he boweth as low as before,
And after him closeth the soft room door,
And he moaneth a moan, and half staggereth he;
He doubteth which way the stairs may be.
But the lower his bow, and the deeper his moan,
The redder the spot in his cheek hath grown,
And he loatheth the kiss to the hard old hand.

"May the devil," thought he, "for his best new brand,
Pluck it, and strike to his soul red-hot!
Why scorn me, and mock me? and why, like a sot,
Must I stoop to him, low as his own court-plot?
Will any one tell us,—will Nature declare,—
How father so foul can have daughter so fair?
But her mother of angels dreamt in her sorrow,
And hence came this face—this dimpled May-morrow."

And as he thought thus, from a door there stole
A hand in a tremble, a balm to his soul;

And soft though it trembled, it close wrung his,
And with it a letter;—and gone it is.

Sir William hath dash'd in the forest awhile,
His being seems all a hasty smile:
And there, by green light and the cooing of doves,
He readeth the letter of her he loves,
And kisseth and readeth again and again;
His bridle is dropp'd on his palfrey's mane,
Who turneth an ear, and then, wise beast,
Croppeth the herbage,—a prudent feast:
For Sir William no sooner hath read nine times,
Than he deemeth delay the worst of crimes:
He snatcheth the bridle, and shakes it hard,
And is off for his life on the loud green sward;
He foameth up steep, and he hisseth in stream,
And saluteth his uncle like one in a dream.

"Sir William, Sir William, what chase is this?
Have you slain a fat buck, or stolen a kiss;
And is all the world, on account of his wife,
After poor dripping Sir William's life!"

"Most honour'd of kinsmen," Sir William cried,
"Nought have I stolen, but hope of a bride;
Her father, no Christian like her, but a Jew,
Would make me disburse; which grieveth her too.
You know who she is, but have yet to know,
What a rose in the shade of that rock could grow;
What fulness of beauty, on footstalk light;
What a soul for sweet uncle to love at sight.
Ah! Sir, she loveth your own blithe fame,
And dareth, she saith, in your sister's name
Entreat me the loan of some fields of corn,
Which her dowry shall buy on the bridal morn.
I blush, dear uncle; I drop mine eyelids;
Yet who should blush when a lady bids?
'Tis lending me bliss; 'tis lending me life;
And she'll kiss you withal, saith the rosy wife."

" Ah, ha," quoth Sir Grey, with his twinkling eyes:
" The lass, I see, is both merry and wise;
I call her to mem'ry, an earnest child,
Now looking straight at you, now laughing wild:
'Tis now—let me see—five long years ago,
And that's a good time for such buds to blow.
Well, dry your outside, and moisten your in;
This wine is a bud of my oldest bin;
And we'll talk of the dowry, and talk of the day,
And see if her bill be good, boy, eh ?"

Sir Grey didn't say, You're my sister's son,
I have left you my gold, and your work is done,—
He hated to speak of his gold, like death;
And he lov'd a good bill as he lov'd his breath;
And yet, for all that, Sir Grey, I trow,
Was a very good man, as corn-dealers go.

So the lover hath seiz'd the new old hand,
And kiss'd it as though it had given the land,
And invok'd on its bounty such bliss from above,
Thought he, " Of a truth I *am* mean in love."
But free was his fervour from any such vice;
For when obligation's more fitting than nice,
We double the glow of our thanks and respect,
To hide from th' obliger his own defect.

" That palfrey of thine's a good palfrey, Will;
He holdeth his head up, and danceth still,
And trippeth as light by the ostler's side,
As though just saddled to bear your bride;
And yet, by Saint Richard, as drench'd is he
And as froth'd as though just out of the sea:
Methinks I hear him just landed free,
Shaking him and his saddle right thunderously.
And he starteth at nothing? "
" No more than the wall."
" And is sure of his footing ? "
" As monarch in hall.
He's a thunder in fight, and a thief on the road,
So swiftly he speedeth whatever his load!

Yet round the wolf's den half a day will he hover,
And carrying a lady, takes heed like a lover."
"And therefore Sir William will part with him never?"
"Nay, uncle, he will;—forever and ever."
"And what such a jewel may purchase, I pray?"
"Thanks, thanks, dearest uncle, and not saying Nay.
Now prythee deny me not grace so small:
The palfrey in truth is comely withal,
And you still shall lend him to bear my bride;
But whom, save our help, should he carry beside?"
"I'm vex'd."
"For pity."
"I'm griev'd."
"Now pray."
"'Tis cheap," thought the uncle, "this not saying Nay."

PART SECOND.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes,
Merrily ever the palfrey goes;
Nought he carrieth now but woes,
And yet full well the palfrey goes.

Sir Grey and Sir Guy, like proper old boys,
Have met, with a world of coughing and noise;
And after subsiding, judiciously dine,
Serious the venison, and chirping the wine.
They talk of the court, now gathering all
To the sunny plump smoke of Earl-Mount Hall:
And pity their elders laid up on the shelves,
And abuse every soul upon earth but themselves:
Only Sir Grey doth it rather to please,
And Sir Guy out of honest old spite and disease:
For Sir Guy hath a face so round and so red,
The whole of his blood seemeth hanging his head,
While Sir Grey's red face is waggish and thin,
And he peereth with upraised nose and chin.

Nathless Sir Grey excepteth from blame
His nephew Sir Will, and his youthful fame;

And each soundeth t'other, to learn what hold
The youth and the lady may have of his gold.
Alas! of his gold will neither speak,
Tho' the wine it grew strong, and the tongue grew weak,
And when the sweet maiden herself appears,
With a breath in her bosom, and blush to her ears,
And the large thankful eyes of the look of a bride,
Sir Grey recollecteth no creature beside:
He watcheth her in, he watcheth her out;
He measureth her ankle, but not with his gout;
He chucketh, like chanticleer over a corn,
And thinks it but forty years since he was born.

"Why, how now, Sir Grey? methinks you grow young:
How soon are your own wedding bells to be rung?
You stare on my daughter, like one elf-struck."

"Alas! and I am,—the sadder my luck:—
Albeit, Sir Guy, your own shoulders count
Years not many more than mine own amount,
And I trust you don't feign to be too old to wed?"

"Hoh! hoh!" quoth Sir Guy; "that was cunningly said."
(Yet he felt flatter'd too, did the white old head.)

"What *are* years?" continued Sir Grey, looking bold;
"There are men never young, and men never old.
Old and young lips may carol in tune;
Green laugheth the oak 'gainst the brown mid June.
Lo! dapper Sir Kit, with his large young wife;
His big-leggéd babes are the pride of his life."

Sir Guy shook his head.
"And the stout old lord,
Whose wife sitteth front him so meek at his board."

"Ay, ay," quoth Sir Guy, "and stuffeth so fast,
His eyesight not reaching the lady's repast."

"Well, well," quoth Sir Grey—
"Ill, ill," quoth Sir Guy;

"The children of old men full well I descry;
They look, by Saint Christendom! old as themselves;
Are dwarf'd, are half wither'd! they grin like elves."

"They may," quoth Sir Grey, "when both parents are old,
Or when the old parent is wrinkle-soul'd;
But not when he's hearty and merry as we.
You grieve me, Sir Guy. Oh! 'tis doleful to see
How vainly a friend may come here for a bride,
Though he loveth the daughter, and father beside."

"Your pardon, your pardon, dear friend," crieth Guy:
"What, you? What, Sir Grey with his ever-bright eye?
We talk'd of the old, but who talk'd of Sir Grey?
But speak ye right soberly? mean what ye say?"

"Ay, truly I do," with a sigh crieth Grey;
"As truly as souls that for Paradise pray.
And hark ye, dear friend; you'll miss your sweet Anne,
If she weddeth, I wot, some giddy young man.
He'll bear her away, and be lov'd alone,
And wish, and yet grudge, your very tomb-stone.
Now give her to me, I'll give her my gold,
And I'll give to yourself my wood and my wold.
And come and live here, and we'll house together,
And laugh o'er our cups at the winter weather.

"A bargain! a bargain!" cried old Sir Guy,
With a stone at his heart, and the land in his eye;
"Your hand to the bargain, my dear old friend:
My 'old' did I call thee? My world without end.
I'll bustle her straight; and to keep all close,
You shall carry her with you, ere creature knows,
Save Rob, and Sir Rafe, and a few beside,
For guests and for guards to the travelling bride;
And so, ere the chattering court come down,
Wed her at home in your own snug town."

Now a murrain, I say, on those foul old men!
I never, myself, shall see fifty again,

And can pity a proper young-blooded old fellow,
Whose heart is green, though his cheek be yellow;
For Nature, albeit she never doth wrong,
Yet seemeth in such to keep youth too long:
And 'tis grievous when such an one seeth his bliss
In a face which can see but the wrinkles in his.
Ah! pray let him think there are dames not young,
For whom the bells yet might be handsomely rung.
'Tis true, grey-beards *have* been, like Jove's of old,
That have met a young lip, nor been thought too bold.
In Norfolk a wondrous old lord hath been seen,
Who at eighty was not more than forty, I ween;
And I myself know a hale elderly man,
In face and in frolic a very god Pan.
But marvels like these are full rare, I wis:
And when elders in general young ladies would kiss,
I exhort the dear souls to fight and to flee,
Unless they should chance to run against me.

Alas! I delay as long as I can,
For who may find words for thy grief, sweet Anne?
'Tis hard, when young heart, singing songs of to-morrow,
Is suddenly met by the old hag, Sorrow.
She fainteth, she prayeth, she feeleth sore ill;
She wringeth her hands; she cannot stand still;
She tasteth the madness of wonder and will;—
Nor, sweet though she was, had she yielded at last,
Had Sir Guy not his loathly old plethora cast
In the scale against love and its life-long gains,
And threaten'd her fears for his bursting veins.
"I'll wed him," she wrote to Sir William;—"yes;
But nothing on earth—" and here her distress
Broke off, and she wept, and the tears fell hot
On the paper, and made a great starry blot.
Alas! tears and letter burn under the eye
Of watchful, unmerciful, old Sir Guy;
And so on a night, when all things round,
Save the trees and the moon, were sleeping sound,
From his casement in shadow he sees his child,
Bent in her weeping, yet alway mild,

The fairest thing in the moon's fair ray,
Borne like some bundle of theft away;
Borne by a horde of old thieves away,
The guests and the guards of false Sir Grey.

She pray'd, but she spake out aloud no word;
She wept, but no breath of self-pity was heard:
Her woe was a sight for no dotards to see;
And yet not bereft of all balm was she;
One balm there was left her, one strange but rare,
Nay, one in the shape of a very despair,
To wit, the palfrey that wont to bear
The knight De la Barre on his daily way
To her, and love, and false Sir Grey.
Him it had borne, her now it bore;
And weeping sweet, though more and more,
And praying for its master's bliss
(Oh! no true love will scoff at this,)
She stoop'd and gave its neck a kiss.

PART THIRD.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes,
Merrily still the palfrey goes;
He goes a path he never chose,
Yet still full well the palfrey goes.

Could the sweet moon laugh, its light
Had surely been convuls'd that night,
To see fifteen old horsemen wag
Their beards, to one poor maiden's nag;
Fifteen old beards in chat and cough,
Rumbling to keep the robbers off,
And ever and aye, when lanes grew close,
Following each the other's nose,
And with the silver beam she cast
Tipp'd, like every tree they pass'd.
The owls they seem'd to hoot their folly
With a staring melancholy.

After jealous sort, I wis,
Cull'd Sir Grey these guests of his,
Not a soul so young as he
Gracing all his chivalry:
Six there were of toothless fame,
With each his man, of jaws as tame;
Then his own, the palsiest there;
And last, Sir Guy's, with whitest hair:
And each had snugg'd him for the night
In old flapp'd hat, and cap as white,
In double cloak, and threefold hose,
Besides good drink to warm his toes,
And so they jog it, beard and nose,
And in the midst the palfrey goes;
Oh! ever well the palfrey goes;
He knows within him what he knows,
And so, full well the palfrey goes.

But in his hamlet, hous'd apart,
How far'd meantime, Sir William's heart?
Oh, when the sun first went to bed,
Not richer look'd the sun's own head,
Nor cast a more all-gladdening eye:
He seem'd to say, "My heav'n is nigh."
For he had heard of rare delights
Between those two old feasting knights,
And of a pillion, new and fair,
Ordain'd to go some road as rare;
With whom? For what sweet rider's art?
Whose, but the dancer's at his heart,
The light, the bright, yet balmy she,
And who shall fetch her home but he?
Who else be summon'd speedily
By the kind uncle full of glee
To fetch away that ecstasy?
So, ever since that news, his ear,
Listening with a lofty fear
Lest it catch one sound too late,
Stood open, like a palace gate
That waits the bride of some great king,

Heard with her trumpets travelling.
At length a letter. Whose? Sir Guy's,
The father's own. With reverent eyes,
With heart impatient to give thanks,
And tears that top their glimmering banks,
He opens, reads, turns pale as death;
His noble bosom gasps for breath;
His Anne has left his love for gold,
But in her kindness manifold
Extorted from his uncle's hoard
Enough to leave him bed and board.
Ah! words like those were never Anne's;
Too plainly they the coarse old man's;
But still the letter; still the fact;
With pangs on pangs his heart is rack'd.
Love is an angel, has no pride;
She'll mourn his love when he has died:
Yet love is truth; so hates deceit;
He'll pass and scorn her in the street.
Now will he watch her house at night
For glimpse of her by some brief light,
Such as perhaps his own pale face
May show: and then he'll quit the place.
Now he will fly her, hate, detest,
Mock: make a by-word and a jest:
Then he hates hate; and who so low
As strike a woman's fame! No, no;
False love might spite the faithless Anne,
But true was aye the gentleman.

Thus paceth he, 'twixt calm and mad,
Till the mid-watch, his chamber sad;
And then lies down in his day-dress,
And sleeps for very weariness,
Catching and starting in his moan,
And waking with a life-long groan.
Sometimes he dreams his sorrow makes
Such weeping wail, that, as he wakes,
He lifts his pitying hand to try
His cheek, and wonders it is dry.

Sometimes his virgin bride and he
Are hous'd for the first time, and free
To dwell within each other's eyes;
And then he wakes with woful cries.
Sometimes he hears her call for aid;
Sometimes beholds her bright arrayed,
But pale, and with her eyes on earth;
And once he saw her pass in mirth,
And look at him, nor eye let fall,
And that was wofull'st dream of all.
At length he hears, or thinks he hears,—
(Or dreams he still with waking ears?)
A tinkle of the house's bell!
What news can midnight have to tell?
He listens. No. No sound again.
The breeze hath stirr'd the window pane;
Perchance it was the tinkling glass;
Perchance 'twas his own brain, alas!
His own weak brain, which hears the blood
Pulse at his ears,—a tingling flood,
Strange mantler in as strange a cup.
Yet hark again!—he starts, leans up;
It seems to fear to wake a mouse,
That sound;—then peals, and wakes the house.

But first, to end what I began,
The journey of sweet houseless Anne.

PART FOURTH.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes,
Merry and well the palfrey goes;
You cannot guess till time disclose,
How perfectly well the palfrey goes.

Ah! dream Sir William what he might,
Little he dreamt the truth that night.
Could but some friend have told him all,
How had he spurred from Hendon Hall,
And dash'd among the doting set,
Who bore away that soft cheek wet!

How had the hills by which they go,
Reëcho'd to his dire " Hallo !"
Startling the waking farmers' ears
With thoughts of thieves and murderers,
And scattering wide those owlish men,
While close he clasp'd his dove again.
But where I left them, safe go they,
Their drowsy noses droop'd alway
To meet the beard's attractive nest,
Push'd upwards from the muffled breast.
Drowsy they nod, and safe they go;
Sir Grey's good steeds the country know,
And lead the rest full soft and well,
Till snore on snore begins to swell,
Warm as owl-plumage, toned as bell;
True snores, composed of spices fine,
Supper, fresh air, and old mull'd wine.
At first they wake with start and fright,
And sniff and stare with all their might,
And sit, one moment, bolt upright:
But soon reverts each nodding crown:
It droops, it yields, it settles down;
Till in one snore, sincere and deep,
The whole grave train are fast asleep.
Sir Grey, the youngest, yields the last:
Besides he held two bridles fast,
The lady's palfrey having shown
Much wish to turn up lanes unknown.
Even sweet Anne can war not long
With sleep, the gentle and the strong;
And as the fingers of Sir Grey
By fine degrees give dulcet way,
And leave the happy beast his will,
The only creatures waking still
And free to go where fancy leads,
Are the twice eight bit-mumbling steeds.
Some few accordingly turn round,
Their happy memories homeward bound,
And soon awake their jolted lords,
Who bless themselves from bandit hordes,

And thinking they have only lagg'd,
Are willingly half jelly-bagg'd.
The rest,—the palfrey meek as any,—
Jog still onward with the many;
Passing now by Kilburn rill,
And now by Hampstead's leaf-stirr'd hill,
Which lulls them still as they descend
The sylvan trough of sweet North-end.
And till they reach thy plot serene
And bowery granges, Golders-green.

Now Golders-green had then a road
(The same as that just re-bestow'd)
Which cross'd the main road, and went straight
To Finchley, and Sir Grey's own gate;
And thither (every sleeper still
Depending on his horse's will,)
Thither, like sheep, turns every head
That follows where the sagest led,—
All but the palfrey's. He, good beast,
From his new master's clutch releas'd,
And longing much his old to see,
His stalls, and all his bounty free
(For poor Sir William's household ways
Were nobler than the rich Sir Grey's,)
Goes neither to the right nor left,
But straight as honesty from theft,
Straight as the dainty to the tooth,
Straight as his lady's love and truth,
Straight for the point, the best of all,
Sir William's arms and Hendon Hall.

Not far from where we left them all,
Those steeds and sires, was Hendon Hall,
Some twice four hundred yards or so;
And steeds to stables quickly go.
The lady wakes with the first start;
She cries aloud; she cowers at heart;
And looks around her in affright
On the wide, lonely, homeless night;

Then checks, as sharply as she may
(Not yet aware how blest his way,)
Her eager friend; and nighly faints,
And calls on fifty gentle saints,
And, if she could, would close her eyes,
For fear of thieves and sorceries,
Of men all beard and blood, and calls
Over lone fields, and lighted palls,
And elves that ever, as you go,
Skip at your side with mop and mow,
With gibbering becks and moony stares,
Forcing your eyes to look on theirs.
And see! the moon forsakes the road;
She lifts her light to whence it flow'd:
Has she a good or ill bestow'd,
That thus her light forsakes the road?
The owls they hoot with gloomier cry;
They seem to see a murder nigh:
And how the palfrey snorts and pulls!
Now Mary help poor wandering fools!
The palfrey pulls, and he must go;
The lady's hand may not say No,
And go he does; the palfrey goes;
He carrieth now no longer woes;
For she, e'en she, now thinks she knows—
Sweet Anne begins to think she knows
Those gathering huts, those poplar rows,
That water, falling as it flows,
This bridge o'er which the palfrey goes,
This gate, at which he stops, and shows
His love to it with greeting nose.
Ah! surely recollects she well
All she has heard her lover tell
Of this same gate, and that same bell:
And she it was, you guess full well,
That pull'd and pull'd again that bell;
And down her love has come pell-mell
With page, and squire, and all who ran,
And was the first to find his Anne,—
Was a most mad and blissful man,
Clasping his fainting, faithful Anne.

"Clasping his fainting, faithful Anne—"

The Palfrey. P. 80.

PART FIFTH.

The palfrey goes, the palfrey goes;
His work is done, you may suppose.
No:—double burden now he knows,
Yet well for ever the palfrey goes.

THE bells in many a giddy ring
Run down the wind to greet the King,
Who comes to feast for service done,
With Earl De Vere at Kensington,
And brings with him his constant grace
Queen Eleanor, that angel's face.

In many-footed order free
First ride his guards, all staid to see;
In midst of whom the trumpets blow,
Straight as power and glory go;
And then his lords and knights, each one
A manly splendour in the sun;
And then his lofty self appears,
Calmer for the shouts he hears,
With his Queen the courteous-eyed,
Like strength and sweetness side by side;
And thus, his banner steering all,
Rides the King to Earl-Mount Hall.

Meantime, ere yet the sovereign pair
Were threading London's closer air,
An humbler twain, heart link'd as they,
Were hearing larks and scenting hay,
And coming too, to Earl-Mount Hall
Through many a green lane's briery wall,
Many a brier and many a rose,
And merrily ever the palfrey goes,
Merrily though he carrieth two,
And one hath sometimes great ado
To sit while o'er the ruts he goes,
Nor clasp the other doubly close,
Who cannot choose but turn, and then—
Why, if none see, he clasps again.

" Ah," thinks the lady, as she looks
Through tears and smiles with half-rebukes,
" Ah, *must* my father break his heart?
For surely now we never part."

Behind, some furlong off, and 'twixt
Those winding oaks with poplars mix'd,
Come two upon a second steed,
Male, too, and female; not indeed
The female young and fair as t' other:
She is the page's honour'd mother.
Much talk they on the road;—at least
Much talks the mother; while the beast
Pulls at the hedges as he goes,
Pricking oft his tossing nose;
And the page, though listening, sees
Newts in the brooks and nests in trees.
Lastly a hound, tongue-lolling, courses
To and fro 'twixt both the horses,
Giving now some weasel chase,
And loving now his master's face,
And so with many a turn and run
Goes twenty furlongs to their one.

This riding double was no crime
In the first great Edward's time;
No brave man thought himself disgrac'd
By two fair arms about his waist;
Nor did the lady blush vermilion,
Dancing on the lover's pillion.
Why? Because all modes and actions
Bow'd not then to Vulgar Fractions;
Nor were tested all resources
By the power to purchase horses.

Many a steed yet won had he,
Our lover, in his chivalry;
For, in sooth, full half his rents
Were ransoms gain'd in tournaments;

But all, save these, were gone at present.—
Ah! the green lane still was pleasant.

Hope was theirs. For one sweet hour
Did they, last night, in bliss devour
Each other's questions, answers, eyes,
Nor ever for divine surprise
Could take a proper breath, much less
The supper brought in hastiness
By the glad little gaping page;
While rose meantime his mother sage
To wait upon the lady sweet,
And snore discreetly on the seat
In the oriel of the room,
Whence gleam'd her night-cap through the gloom.
Then parted they to lie awake
For transport, spite of all heart-ache:
For heaven's in any roof that covers,
Any one same night, two lovers;
They may be divided still;
They may want, in all but will;
But they know that each is there,
Each just parted, each in prayer;
Each more close, because apart,
And every thought clasp'd heart to heart.

Alas! in vain their hearts agree:
Good must seem good, as well as be;
And lest a spot should stain his flower
For blushing in a brideless bower,
Sir William with the lark must rise,
And bear,—but whither bear?—his prize:
Not to Sir Grey's, for that were scorn;
Not to Sir Guy's, to live forlorn;
Not to some abbey's jealous care,
For Heaven would try to wed her there;
But to a dame that serv'd the Queen,
His aunt, and no mean dame I ween,—
A dame of rank, a dame of honour,
A dame (may earth lie green upon her!)

That felt for nature, love, and truth,
And hated old age pawing youth:
One that at no time held wrong right,
Yet somehow took a dear delight,
By secret measures, sweet and strong,
In giving right a zest of wrong.
To her Sir William brings his Anne
Three hours before the feast began,
But first has sent his page to spy
How day has dawn'd with old Sir Guy.
The page scarce vanish'd, reappears,
His eyes wide open as their ears,
And tells how all the beards are there:
All;—every mump of quivering hair,
Come back with groan, and back with stare,
To set Sir Guy upon the rack,
And find the lady *not* come back.

"Now God bless all their groans and stares,
And eke their most irreverend hairs!"
Cries the good dame, the Lady Maud,
Laughing with all her shoulders broad:—
"My budget bursteth sure with this!
This were a crowning galliardise
For king himself to tell in hall,
Against his lords' wit groweth small."
And rustling in her vestments broad,
Forth sails the laughing Lady Maud
To tell the King and tell the Queen;
But first she kiss'd sweet Anne between
The sighing lips and downcast eyes,
And said, "Old breaking hearts are lies."

Three hours have come, three hours have gone;
King Edward, with his crownet on,
Sits highest where the feast is set;
With wine the sweetest lips are wet;
The music makes a heaven above,
And underneath is talk of love.

The King look'd out from where he sat,
And cried "Sir Guy de Paul!" Thereat
The music stopp'd with awe and wonder,
Like discourse when speaks the thunder;
And the feasters, one and all,
Gazed upon Sir Guy de Paul.

"How chanceth it, Sir Guy de Paul,
Your daughter graceth not the call
To the feast at Earl-Mount Hall?
My friends here boast her like the Queen:
What maketh such a face unseen?"

"Sir," quoth Sir Guy, "a loyal breast
Hath brought a man here sore distress'd.
My daughter, through device, 'tis fear'd,
Of some false knight, hath disappear'd."

"Hah!" quoth the King, "since when, I pray?
They tell me 'twas but yesterday
That she was mark'd, for two long hours,
Praying behind her window-flowers."

"Alas! sir, 'twas at night.—Forgive
My failing speech. I scarcely live
Till I have sought her high and low,
And know, what then the King shall know."

"Now God confound all snares, and bring
Base hearts to sorrow!" cried the King;
"Myself will aid thee, and full soon.
Ho! master bard, good Rafe de Boon,
Pinch thy fair harp, and make it tell
Of those old thieves who slept so well."

The minstrel bowed with blushing glee;
His harp into his arms took he,
And rous'd its pulses to a mood
Befitting love and hardihood.

Then, with his ready wit sincere,
He sang to every tingling ear,
How fifteen brave old beards, one night,
Bore off one lady in a fright;
With what amazing knees they kept
Their saddles, and how fiercely slept;
And how a certain palfrey chose
To leave them to their proud repose,
And through the wildering night-time bear
The lady to her lover's care.
He nam'd no names, he drew no face,
Yet not a soul mistook the case;
Till by degrees, boards, tap'stries, rafters,
Echoed the King's and feasters' laughters;
And once again, all Earl-Mount Hall
Gazed upon Sir Guy de Paul.

But how the laughter raged and scream'd,
When lo! these fifteen beards all stream'd
In at the great door of the hall!
Those very grey-beards, one and all,
By the King's command in thrall,
All mounted and all scar'd withal,
And scarlet as Sir Guy de Paul!
By heavens! 'twas "merry in the hall,"
When every beard but those "wagg'd all."

Out spoke the King with wrathful breath,
Smiting the noise as still as death:
"Are these the suitors to destroy
My projects with new tales of Troy?
These the bold knights and generous lords
To wed our heiresses and wards?
Now, too, while Frenchman and while Scot
Have cost us double swords, God wot!
Are these replenishers of nations?
Begetters of great generations?
Out with them all! and bring to light
A fitter and a fairer sight."

Queen Eleanor glanc'd down the hall,
She pitied old Sir Guy de Paul,
Who, while these doters went their way,
Knew neither how to go nor stay,
But sate bent close, his shame to smother,
Rubbing one hand upon the other.
A page she sent him, bright and mild,
Who led him forth, like his own child.

Out went the beards by a side door;
The great one roll'd apart once more,
And, as the King had given command,
In rode a couple, hand in hand,
Who made the stillness stiller:—he
A man to grace all jeopardy;
And all a lovely comfort, she.
The stalwart youth bestrode a steed,
A Barbary, the King's own breed;
The lady grac'd her palfrey still,
Sweet beast, that ever hath his will,
And paceth now beside his lord,
Straight for the King at the high board,
Till sharp the riders halt, and wait
The speaking of the crowned state,—
The knight with reverential eyes,
Whose grateful hope no claim implies:
The lady in a bashful glow,
Her bosom billowing to and fro.

"Welcome! Sir William de la Barre,"
The monarch cried; "a right good star
For ladies' palfreys led astray;
And welcome his fair flower of May.
By heavens! I will not have my knights
Defrauded of their lady rights.
I give thee, William de la Barre,
For this thy bride, and that thy scar
Won from the big-limb'd traitor Pole,
The day thou dash'dst out half his soul

And lett'st his ransom free, for ruth
(For which thou wert a foolish youth,)
All those good meadows, lately his,
Down by the Brent, where thy hall is,
And all thy rights in that same hall,
Together with the osieries all
That skirt the streams by down and dale,
From Hendon into Perivale.
And now dismount. And hark ye, there,
Sir Priest, my chaplain Christopher,
(See how the honest body dries
The tears of claret in his eyes !)—
Come and betroth these friends of mine,
Till at the good Earl's chapel shrine
Thy holy magic make them one :
The King and Queen will see it done.
But first a royal health to all
The friends we leave in this fair hall ;
And may all knights' and ladies' horses
Take, like the palfrey, vigorous courses !"

With princely laughter rose the King,
Rose all, the laughter echoing,
Rose the proud wassail, rose the shout
By the trumpets long stretch'd out ;
You would have thought that roof and all
Rose in that heart-lifted hall.
On their knees are two alone ;
The palfrey and the barb have gone :
And then arose those two beside,
And the music from its pride
Falls into a beauteous prayer,
Like an angel quitting air ;
And the King and his soft Queen
Smile upon those two serene,
Whom the priest, accosting bland,
Puts, full willing, hand in hand.
Ah scarcely even King and Queen
Did they then perceive, I ween,
Nor well to after-memory call,
How they went from out that hall.

What more? Sir Guy, and then Sir Grey,
Died each upon a fine spring day;
And, in their hatred of things small,
Left him, now wanting nothing, all:
(All which, at least, that mighty claw
Permitted them, yclept the law.)
The daughter wept, and wept the more
To think her tears would soon be o'er;
Sir William neither wept nor smil'd,
But grac'd the father for the child,
And sent, to join the funeral shows,
Bearing scutcheons, bearing woes,
The palfrey; and full well he goes;
Oh! merrily well the palfrey goes;
Grief great as any there he knows,
Yet merrily ever the palfrey goes.

L'ENVOY.

To HER, who loves all peaceful glory,
Therefore laurell'd song and story;
Who, as blooming maiden should,
Married blest, with young and good;
And whose zeal for healthy duties
Set on horseback half our beauties;
Hie thee, little book,[8] and say—
(Blushing for leave unbegg'd alway;
And yet how beg it for one flower
Cast in the path of Sovereign Power?)
Say that thy verse, though small it be,
Yet mov'd by ancient minstrelsy
To sing of youth escap'd from age,
Scenes pleasant, and a Palfrey sage,
And meditated, morn by morn,
Among the trees where she was born,
Dares come, on grateful memory's part,
Not to Crown'd Head, but to Crown'd Heart.

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS.[9]

King Francis was a hearty king, and lov'd a royal sport,[10]
And one day as his lions fought, sat looking on the court;
The nobles filled the benches, with the ladies in their pride,
And 'mongst them sat the Count de Lorge, with one for whom he sigh'd:
And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that crowning show,
Valour and love, and a king above, and the royal beasts below.

Ramp'd and roar'd the lions, with horrid laughing jaws;
They bit, they glar'd, gave blows like beams, a wind went with their paws;
With wallowing might and stifled roar they roll'd on one another,
Till all the pit with sand and mane was in a thunderous smother;
The bloody foam above the bars came whisking through the air;
Said Francis then, "Faith, gentlemen, we're better here than there."

De Lorge's love o'erheard the King, a beauteous lively dame
With smiling lips and sharp bright eyes, which always seem'd the same;
She thought, the Count my lover is brave as brave can be;
He surely would do wondrous things to show his love of me;
King, ladies, lovers, all look on; the occasion is divine;
I'll drop my glove, to prove his love; great glory will be mine.

She dropp'd her glove, to prove his love, then look'd at him and smiled;
He bow'd, and in a moment leap'd among the lions wild:
The leap was quick, return was quick, he has regain'd his place,
Then threw the glove, but not with love, right in the lady's face.
"By Heav'n!" said Francis, "rightly done!" and he rose from where he sat:
"No love," quoth he, "but vanity, sets love a task like that."

GODIVA.

INSCRIBED TO JOHN HUNTER.

JOHN HUNTER, friend of Leigh Hunt's verse, and lover
of all duty,
Hear how the boldest naked deed was clothed in saintliest
beauty.

Earl Lefric by his hasty oath must solemnly abide;
He thought to put a hopeless bar, and finds it turn'd aside;
His lady to remove the toll that makes the land forlorn,
Will surely ride through Coventry, naked as she was born;
She said—the people will be kind; they love a gentle deed;
They piously will turn from me, nor shame a friend in need.

Earl Lefric, half in holy dread, and half in loving care,
Hath bade the people all keep close in penitence and prayer;
The windows are fast boarded up; nor hath a sound been
heard
Since yester-eve, save household dog, or latest summer-bird;
Only Saint Mary's bell begins at intervals to go,
Which is to last till all be past, to let obedience know.

The mass is said; the priest hath bless'd the lady's pious will;
Then down the stairs she comes undress'd, but in a mantle
still;
Her ladies are about her close, like mist about a star;
She speaks some little cheerful words, but knows not what
they are;
The door is pass'd; the saddle press'd; her body feels the
air;
Then down they let, from out its net, her locks of piteous hair.

Oh, then how every list'ner feels, the palfrey's foot that hears!
The rudest are awed suddenly, the soft and brave in tears;
The poorest that were most in need of what the lady did,
Deem her a blessed creature born to rescue men forbid:
He that had said they could have died for her beloved sake,
Had rated low the thanks of woe. Death frights not old
Heart-ache.

Sweet saint! No shameless brow was hers, who could not
bear to see,
For thinking of her happier lot, the pine of poverty:
No unaccustom'd deed she did, in scorn of custom's self,
She that but wish'd the daily bread upon the poor man's shelf.
Naked she went, to clothe the naked. New she was, and
bold,
Only because she held the laws which Mercy preach'd of old.

They say she blush'd to be beheld, e'en of her ladies' eyes;
Then took her way with downward look, and brief, bewilder'd
sighs.
A downward look; a beating heart; a sense of the new, vast,
Wide, open, naked world, and yet of every door she pass'd;
A pray'r, a tear, a constant mind, a listening ear that glow'd,
These we may dare to fancy there, on that religious road.

But who shall blind his heart with more? Who dare, with
lavish guess,
Refuse the grace she hoped of us, in her divine distress?
In fancy still she holds her way, forever pacing on,
The sight unseen, the guiltless Eve, the shame unbreath'd
upon;
The step, that upon Duty's ear is growing more and more,
Though yet, alas! it hath to pass by many a scorner's door.

CAPTAIN SWORD AND CAPTAIN PEN.

ON THE

DUTY OF CONSIDERING THE HORRORS

AND THE

ALLEGED NECESSITY OF WAR:

Originally published in a Postscript to the First Edition.

THE object of this poem is to show the horrors of war, the false ideas of power produced in the minds of its leaders, and, by inference, the unfitness of those leaders for the government of the world.

The author intends no more offence to any one than can be helped: he feels due admiration for that courage and energy, the supposed misdirection of which it deplores; he heartily acknowledges the probability, that that supposed misdirection has been hitherto no misdirection, but a necessity—but he believes that the time is come when, by encouraging the disposition to question it, its services and its sufferings may be no longer required; and he would fain tear asunder the veil from the sore places of war;—would show what has been hitherto kept concealed, or not shown earnestly, and for the purpose;—would prove, at all events, that the time has come for putting an end to those phrases in the narratives of warfare, by which a suspicious delicacy is palmed upon the reader, who is told, after everything has been done to excite his admiration of war, that his feelings are "spared" a recital of its miseries—that "a veil" is drawn over them—a "truce" given to descriptions which only "harrow up the soul," &c.

Suppose it be *necessary* to "harrow up the soul," in order that the soul be no longer harrowed? Moralists and preachers do not deal after this tender fashion with moral, or even physical consequences, resulting from other evils. Why should they spare these? Why refuse to look their own effeminacy in the face,—their own gaudy and overweening encouragement of what they dare not contemplate in its results? Is a murder in the streets worth attending to,—a single wounded man worth carrying to the hospital,—and are all the murders, and massacres, and fields of wounded, and the madness, the conflagrations, the famines, the miseries of families, and the rickety frames and melancholy bloods of posterity, only fit to have an embroidered handkerchief

thrown over them? Must "ladies and gentlemen" be called off, that they may not "look that way," the "sight is so shocking?" Does it become us to let others endure, what we cannot bear even to think of?

Even if nothing else were to come of inquiries into the horrors of war, surely they would cry aloud for some better provision against their extremity *after* battle,—for some regulated and certain assistance to the wounded and agonized,—so that we might hear no longer of men left in cold and misery all night, writhing with torture,—of bodies stripped by prowlers, perhaps murderers,—and of frenzied men, the darlings of their friends, dying, two, and even several days after the battle, of famine! The field of Waterloo was not completely cleared of its dead and dying till nearly a week! Surely large companies of men should be organized for the sole purpose of assisting and clearing away the field after battle. They should be steady men, not lightly admitted, nor unpossessed of some knowledge of surgery, and they should be attached to the surgeon's staff. Both sides would respect them for their office, and keep them sacred from violence. Their duties would be too painful and useful to get them disrespected for not joining in the fight—and, possibly, before long, they would help to do away their own necessity, by detailing what they beheld. Is that the reason why there is no such establishment? The question is asked not in bitterness, but to suggest a self-interrogation to the instincts of war.

I have not thought proper to put notes to the poem, detailing the horrors which I have touched upon; nor even to quote my authorities, which are unfortunately too numerous, and contain worse horrors still. They are furnished by almost every history of a campaign, in all quarters of the world. Circumstances so painful, in a first attempt to render them public for their own sakes, would, I thought, even meet with less attention in prose than in verse, however less fitted they may appear for it at first sight.[11] Verse, if it has any enthusiasm, at once demands and conciliates attention; it proposes to say much in little; and it associates with it the idea of something consolatory, or otherwise sustaining. But there is one prose specimen of these details, which I will give, because it made so great an impression on me in my youth, that I never afterwards could help calling it to mind when war was spoken of; and as I had a good deal to say on that subject, having been a public journalist during one of the most interesting periods of modern history, and never having been blinded into an admiration of war by the dazzle of victory, the circumstance may help to show how salutary a record of this kind may be, and what an impression the subject might be brought

to make on society. The passage is in a note to one of Mr. Southey's poems,—the "Ode to Horror,"—and is introduced by another frightful record, less horrible, because there is not such agony implied in it, nor is it alive.

"I extract," says Mr. Southey, "the following picture of consummate horror from notes to a poem written in twelve-syllable verse, upon the campaign of 1794 and 1795; it was during the retreat to Deventer. 'We could not proceed a hundred yards without perceiving the dead bodies of men, women, children, and horses, in every direction. One scene made an impression upon my memory which time will never be able to efface. Near another cart we perceived a stout-looking man and a beautiful young woman, with an infant, about seven months old, at the breast, all three frozen and dead, the mother had most certainly expired in the act of suckling her child; as with one breast exposed she lay upon the drifted snow, the milk to all appearance in a stream drawn from the nipple by the babe, and instantly congealed. The infant seemed as if its lips had but just then been disengaged, and it reposed its little head upon the mother bosom, with an overflow of milk, frozen as it trickled from the mouth. Their countenances were perfectly composed and fresh, resembling those of persons in a sound and tranquil slumber.'"

"The following description," he continues, "of a field of battle is in the words of one who passed over the field of Jemappe, after Dumourier's victory: 'It was on the third day after the victory obtained by General Dumourier over the Austrians, that I rode across the field of battle. The scene lies on a waste common, rendered then more dreary by the desertion of the miserable hovels before occupied by peasants. Everything that resembled a human habitation was desolated, and for the most part they had been burnt or pulled down, to prevent their affording shelter to the posts of the contending armies. The ground was ploughed up by the wheels of the artillery and waggons; everything like herbage was trodden into mire; broken carriages, arms, accoutrements, dead horses and men were strewed over the heath. *This was the third day after the battle: it was the beginning of November, and for three days a bleak wind and heavy rain had continued incessantly.* There were still remaining alive several hundreds of horses, and of the human victims of that dreadful fight. I can speak with certainty of having seen more than four hundred men *still living*, unsheltered, *without food*, and without any human assistance, most of them confined to the spot where they had fallen *by broken limbs*. The two armies had proceeded, and abandoned these miserable wretches to their fate. *Some of the dead persons appeared to have expired*

in the act of embracing each other. Two young French officers, who were brothers, had crawled under the side of a dead horse, where they had contrived a kind of shelter by means of a cloak: they were both mortally wounded, and groaning *for each other.* One very fine young man had just strength enough to drag himself out of a hollow partly filled with water, and was laid upon a little hillock, groaning with agony; A GRAPE-SHOT HAD CUT ACROSS THE UPPER PART OF HIS BELLY, AND HE WAS KEEPING IN HIS BOWELS WITH A HANDKERCHIEF AND HAT. He begged of me to end his misery! He complained of dreadful thirst. I filled him the hat of a dead soldier with water, which he nearly drank off at once, and left him to that end of his wretchedness which could not be far distant.' "

"I hope," concludes Mr. Southey, "I have always felt and expressed an honest and Christian abhorrence of wars, and of the systems that produce them; but my ideas of their immediate horrors fell infinitely short of this authentic picture."

Mr. Southey, in his subsequent lives of conquerors, and his other writings, will hardly be thought to have acted up to this "abhorrence of wars, and of the systems that produce them." Nor is he to be blamed for qualifying his view of the subject, equally blameless (surely) as they are to be held who have retained their old views, especially by him who helped to impress them. His friend, Mr. Wordsworth, in the vivacity of his admonitions to hasty complaints of evil, has gone so far as to say that "Carnage is God's daughter," and thereby subjected himself to the scoffs of a late noble wit. He is addressing the Deity himself:

> "But thy most dreaded instrument,
> In working out a pure intent,
> Is man, arrayed for mutual slaughter;
> Yea, Carnage is thy daughter."

Mr. Wordsworth is a fine poet and a philosophical thinker in spite of his having here paid a tremendous compliment to a rhyme; (for unquestionably the word "slaughter" provoked him into that imperative "Yea," and its subsequent venturous affiliation;) but the judgment, to say no more of it, is rash. Whatever the Divine Being intends by his permission or use of evil, it becomes us to think the best of it; but not to affirm the appropriation of the particulars to Him under their worst appellation, seeing that He has implanted in us a horror of them, and a wish to do them away. What it is right in Him to do, is one thing; what it is proper in us to affirm that He actually does, is another. And, above all, it is idle to affirm what he intends to do forever, and to have us eternally venerate and abstain from questioning

an evil. All good and evil, and vice and virtue themselves, might become confounded in the human mind by a like daring; and humanity sit down under every buffet of misfortune, without attempting to resist it: which, fortunately, is impossible. Plato cut this knotty point better, by regarding evil as a thing senseless and unmalignant, (indeed, no philosopher regards anything as malignant, or malignant for malignity's sake;) out of which, or notwithstanding it, good is worked, and to be worked, perhaps finally to the abolition of evil. But whether this consummation be possible or not, and even if the dark horrors of evil be necessary towards the enjoyment of the light of good, still the horror must be maintained, where the object is really horrible; otherwise, we but the more idly resist the contrast if necessary—and, what is worse, endanger the chance of melioration, if possible.

Did war appear to me an inevitable evil, I should be one of the last men to show it in any other than its holiday clothes. I can appeal to writings before the public, to testify whether I am in the habit of making the worst of anything, or of not making it yield its utmost amount of good. My inclinations, as well as my reason, lie all that way. I am a passionate and grateful lover of all the beauties of the universe, moral and material; and the chief business of my life is to endeavour to give others the like fortunate affection. But, on the same principle, I feel it my duty to look evil in the face, in order to discover if it be capable of amendment; and I do not see why the miseries of war are to be spared this interrogation, simply because they are frightful and enormous. Men get rid of smaller evils which lie in their way—nay, of great ones; and there appears to be no reason why they should not get rid of the greatest, if they will but have the courage. We have abolished inquisitions and the rack, burnings for religion, burnings for witchcraft, hangings for forgery, (a great triumph in a commercial country,) much of the punishment of death in some countries, all of it in others. Why not abolish war? Mr. Wordsworth writes no odes to tell us that the Inquisition was God's daughter; though Lope de Vega, who was one of its officers, might have done so—and Mr. Wordsworth too, had he lived under its dispensation. Lope de Vega, like Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Southey, was a good man, as well as a celebrated poet; and we will concede to his memory what the English poets will, perhaps, not be equally disposed to grant, (for they are severe on the Romish faith,) that even the Inquisition, *like War*, might possibly have had some utility in its evil, were it no other than a hastening of Christianity by its startling contradictions of it. Yet it has gone. The Inquisition, as War may be hereafter, is no more. Daughter if it was of the Supreme

Good, it was no immortal daughter. Why should "Carnage" be —especially as God has put it in our heads to get rid of it?

I am aware of what may be said on these occasions, to "puzzle the will;" and I concede, of course, that mankind may entertain false views of their power to change anything for the better. I concede that all change may be only in appearance, and not make any real difference in the general amount of good and evil; that evil, to a certain invariable amount, may be necessary to the amount of good, (the overbalance of which, with a most hearty and loving sincerity, I ever acknowledge;) and finally, that all which the wisest of men could utter on any such subject might possibly be nothing but a jargon,—the witless and puny voice of what we take to be a mighty orb, but which after all, is only a particle in the starry dust of the universe.

On the other hand, all this may be something very different from what we take it to be, setting aside even the opinions which consider mind as everything, and time and space themselves as only modifications of it, or breathing room in which it exists, weaving the thoughts which it calls life, death and materiality.

But, be his metaphysical opinions what they may, who but some fantastic individual, or ultra-contemplative scholar, ever thinks of subjecting to them his practical notions of bettering his condition! And how soon is it likely that men will leave off endeavouring to secure themselves against the uneasier chances of vicissitude, even if Providence ordains them to do so for no other end than the preservation of vicissitude itself, and not in order to help them out of the husks and thorns of action into the flowers of it, and into the air of heaven? Certain it is, at all events, that the human being is incited to increase his amount of good; and that when he is endeavouring to do so, he is at least not fulfilling the worst part of his necessity. Nobody tells us, when we attempt to put out a fire, and to save the lives of our neighbours, that Conflagration is God's daughter, or Murder God's daughter. On the contrary, these are things which Christendom is taught to think ill of, and to wish to put down; and therefore we should put down war, which is murder and conflagration by millions.

To those who tell us that nations would grow cowardly and effeminate without war, we answer, "Try a reasonable condition of peace first, and then prove it. Try a state of things which mankind have never yet attained, because they had no press, and no universal comparison of notes; and consider, in the meanwhile, whether so cheerful, and intelligent, and just a state, seeing fair play between body and mind, and educated into habits of activity, would be likely to uneducate itself into what was neither respected nor customary. Prove, in the meanwhile, that nations

are cowardly and effeminate, that have been long unaccustomed to war; that the South Americans are so; or that all our robust countrymen, who do not "go for soldiers," are timid agriculturists and manufacturers, with not a quoit to throw on the green, or a saucy word to give to an insult. Moral courage is in self-respect and the sense of duty; physical courage is a matter of health or organization. Are these predispositions likely to fail in a community of instructed freemen? Doubters of advancement are always arguing from a limited past to an unlimited future; that is to say, from a past of which they know but a point, to a future of which they know nothing. They stand on the bridge "between two eternities," seeing a little bit of it behind them, and nothing at all of what is before, and uttering those words unfit for mortal tongue, "man ever was," and "man ever will be." They might as well say what is beyond the stars. It appears to be a part of the necessity of things, from what we see of the improvements they make, that all human improvement should proceed by the co-operation of human means. But what blinker into the night of next week,—what luckless prophet of the impossibilities of steamboats and steam-carriages,—shall presume to say how far those improvements are to extend? Let no man faint in the co-operation with which God has honoured him.

As to those superabundances of population which wars and other evils are supposed to be necessary in order to keep down, there are questions which have a right to be put, long before any such necessity is assumed; and till those questions be answered, and the experiments dependent upon them tried, the interrogators have a right to assume that no such necessity exists. I do not enter upon them—for I am not bound to do so; but I have touched upon them in the poem; and the "too rich," and other disingenuous half-reasoners, know well what they are. All passionate remedies for evil are themselves evil, and tend to reproduce what they remedy. It is high time for the world to show that it has come to man's estate, and can put down what is wrong without violence. Should the wrong still return, we should have a right to say with the apostle, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;" for meanwhile we should "not have done evil that good may come." That "good" may come! nay, that evil may be perpetuated; for what good, superior to the alternatives denounced, is achieved by this eternal round of war and its causes? Let us do good in a good and kind manner, and trust to the co-operation of Providence for the result. It seems the only real way of attaining to the very best of which our earth is capable; and at the very worst, necessity, like the waters, will find its level, and the equity of things be justified.

I firmly believe that war, or the sending thousands of our fellow-creatures to cut one another to bits, often for what they have no concern in, nor understand, will one day be reckoned far more absurd than if people were to settle an argument over the dinner-table with their knives,—a logic, indeed, which was once fashionable in some places during the "good old times." The world has seen the absurdity of that practice: why should it not come to years of discretion, with respect to violence on a larger scale? The other day, our own country and the United States agreed to refer a point in dispute to the arbitration of a king of Holland; a compliment (if we are to believe the newspapers) of which his Majesty was justly proud. He struck a medal on the strength of it, which history will show as a set-off against his less creditable attempts to force his opinions upon the Belgians. Why should not every national dispute be referred, in like manner, to a third party? There is reason to suppose that the judgment would stand a good chance of being impartial; and it would benefit the character of the judge, and dispose him to receive judgments of the same kind; till at length the custom would prevail, like any other custom; and men be astonished at the custom that preceded it. In private life, none but schoolboys and the vulgar settle disputes by blows; even duelling is losing its dignity.

Two nations, or most likely two governments, have a dispute; they reason the point backwards and forwards; they cannot determine it; perhaps they do not wish to determine it; so, like two carmen in the street, they fight it out; first, however, dressing themselves up to look fine, and pluming themselves on their absurdity; just as if the two carmen were to go and put on their Sunday clothes, and stick a feather in their hat besides, in order to be as dignified and fantastic as possible. Then they "go at it," and cover themselves with mud, blood, and glory. Can anything be more ridiculous? Yet, apart from the habit of thinking otherwise, and being drummed into the notion by the very toys of infancy, the similitude is not one atom too ludicrous; no, nor a thousandth part enough so. I am aware that a sarcasm is but a sarcasm, and need not imply any argument—never includes all;—but it acquires a more respectable character when so much is done to keep it out of sight,—when so many questions are begged against it by "pride, pomp, and circumstance," and allegations of necessity. Similar allegations may be, and are brought forward, by other nations of the world, in behalf of customs which we, for our parts, think very ridiculous, and do our utmost to put down; never referring them, as we refer our own, to the mysterious ordinations of Providence; or, if we do, never

hesitating to suppose, that Providence, in moving us to interfere, is varying its ordinations. Now, all that I would ask of the advocates of war, is to apply the possible justice of this supposition to their own case, for the purpose of thoroughly investigating the question.

I will conclude these remarks with quotations from three writers of the present day, who may be fairly taken to represent the three distinct classes of the leaders of knowledge, and who will show what is thought of the feasibility of putting an end to war,—the Utilitarian, or those who are all for the tangible and material—the Metaphysical, or those who recognise, in addition, the spiritual and imaginative wants of mankind—and lastly (in no offensive sense), the Men of the World, whose opinion will have the greatest weight of all with the incredulous, and whose speaker is a soldier to boot, and a man who evidently sees fair play to all the weaknesses as well as strengths of our nature.

The first quotation is from the venerable Mr. Bentham, a man who certainly lost sight of no existing or possible phase of society, such as the ordinary disputants on this subject contemplate. I venture to think him not thoroughly philosophical on the point, especially in what he says in reproach of men educated to think differently from himself. But the passage will show the growth of opinion in a practical and highly influential quarter.

"Nothing can be worse," says Mr. Bentham, "than the general feeling on the subject of war. The Church, the State, the ruling few, the subject many, all seem to have combined, in order to patronize vice and crime in their very widest sphere of evil. Dress a man in particular garments, call him by a particular name, and he shall have authority, on divers occasions, to commit every species of offence, to pillage, to murder, to destroy human felicity, and, for so doing, he shall be rewarded.

"Of all that is pernicious in admiration, the admiration of heroes is the most pernicious; and how delusion should have made us admire what virtue should teach us to hate and loathe, is among the saddest evidences of human weakness and folly. The crimes of heroes seem lost in the vastness of the field they occupy. A lively idea of the mischief they do, of the misery they create, seldom penetrates the mind, through the delusions with which thoughtlessness and falsehood have surrounded their names and deeds. Is it that the magnitude of the evil is too gigantic for entrance? We read of twenty thousand men killed in a battle with no other feeling than that it 'was a glorious victory.' Twenty thousand, or ten thousand, what reck we of their sufferings? The hosts who perished are evidence of the completeness of the triumph; and the completeness of the triumph is the measure of me-

rit, and the glory of the conqueror. Our schoolmasters and the immoral books they so often put into our hands, have inspired us with an affection for heroes; and the hero is more heroic in proportion to the numbers of the slain—add a cipher, not one iota is added to our disapprobation. Four or two figures give us no more sentiment of pain than one figure, while they add marvellously to the grandeur and splendour of the victor. Let us draw forth one individual from those thousands, or tens of thousands—his leg has been shivered by one ball, his jaw broken by another—he is bathed in his own blood, and that of his fellows,—yet he lives, tortured by thirst, fainting, famishing. He is but one of the twenty thousand—one of the actors and sufferers in the scene of the hero's glory—and of the twenty thousand there is scarcely one whose suffering or death will not be the centre of a circle of misery. Look again, admirers of that hero! Is not this wretchedness? Because it is repeated ten, ten hundred, ten thousand times, is not this wretchedness?

"The period will assuredly arrive, when better instructed generations will require all the evidence of history to credit, that, in times deeming themselves enlightened, human beings should have been honoured with public approval, in the very proportion of the misery they caused and the mischiefs they perpetrated. They will call upon all the testimony which incredulity can require, to persuade them that, in past ages, men there were—men, too, deemed worthy of popular recompense—who, for some small pecuniary retribution, hired themselves out to do any deeds of pillage, devastation, and murder, which might be demanded of them. And, still more will it shock their sensibilities to learn, that such men, such men-destroyers, were marked out as the eminent and the illustrious—as the worthy of laurels and monuments—of eloquence and poetry. In that better and happier epoch, the wise and the good will be busied in hurling into oblivion, or dragging forth for exposure to universal ignominy and obloquy, many of the heads we deem *heroic;* while the true fame and the perdurable glories will be gathered around the creators and diffusers of happiness."—*Deontology.*

Our second quotation is from one of the subtilest and most universal thinkers now living—Thomas Carlyle—chiefly known to the public as a German scholar and the friend of Goethe, but deeply respected by other leading intellects of the day, as a man who sees into the utmost recognised possibilities of knowledge. See what he thinks of war and of the possibility of putting an end to it. We forget whether we got the extract from the *Edinburgh* or the *Foreign Quarterly Review,* having made it sometime back and mislaid the reference; and we take a liberty with him in

mentioning his name as the writer, for which his zeal in the cause of mankind will pardon us.[12]

"The better minds of all countries," observes Mr. Carlyle, "begin to understand each other, and, which follows naturally, to love each other and help each other, by whom ultimately all countries in all their proceedings are governed.

"Late in man's history, yet clearly, at length, it becomes manifest to the dullest, that mind is stronger than matter—that mind is the creator and shaper of matter—that not brute force, but only persuasion and faith, is the King of this world. The true poet, who is but an inspired thinker, is still an Orpheus whose lyre tames the savage beasts, and evokes the dead rocks to fashion themselves into palaces and stately inhabited cities. It has been said, and may be repeated, that literature is fast becoming all in all to us—our Church, our senate, our whole social constitution. The true Pope of Christendom is not that feeble old man in Rome, nor is its autocrat the Napoleon, the Nicholas, with its half million even of obedient bayonets; such autocrat is himself but a more cunningly devised bayonet and military engine in the hands of a mightier than he. The true autocrat, or Pope, is that man, the real or seeming wisest of the last age; crowned after death; who finds his hierarchy of gifted authors, his clergy of assiduous journalists: whose decretals, written, not on parchment, but on the living souls of men, it were an inversion of the laws of nature to disobey. In these times of ours, all intellect has fused itself into literature; literature—printed thought, is the molten sea and wonder-bearing chaos, in which mind after mind casts forth its opinion, its feeling, to be molten into the general mass, and to be worked there; interest after interest is engulphed in it, or embarked in it; higher, higher it rises round all the edifices of existence; they must all be molten into it, and anew bodied forth from it, or stand unconsumed among its fiery surges. Woe to him whose edifice is not built of true asbest, and on the everlasting rock, but on the false sand and the drift-wood of accident, and the paper and parchment of antiquated habit! For the power or powers exist not on our earth that can say to that sea—roll back, or bid its proud waves be still.

"What form so omnipotent an element will assume—how long it will welter to and fro as a wild democracy, a wilder anarchy—what constitution and organization it will fashion for itself, and for what depends on it in the depths of time, is a subject for prophetic conjecture, wherein brightest hope is not unmingled with fearful apprehensions and awe at the boundless unknown. The more cheering is this one thing, which we do see and know—that its tendency is to a universal European commonweal;

that the wisest in all nations will communicate and coöperate; whereby Europe will again have its true Sacred College and Council of Amphictyons; wars will become rarer, less inhuman; and in the course of centuries, such delirious ferocity in nations, as in individuals it already is, may be proscribed and become obsolete for ever."

My last and not least conclusive extract, (for it shows the actual hold which these speculations have taken of the minds of practical men—of men out in the world, and even of *soldiers*,) is from a book popular among all classes of readers—the *Bubbles from the Brunnens of Nassau*, written by Major Sir Francis Head. What he says of one country's educating another, by the natural progress of books and opinion, and of the effect which this is likely to have upon governments even as remote and unwilling as Russia, is particularly worthy of attention.

The author is speaking of some bathers at whom he had been looking and of a Russian Prince, who lets us into some curious information respecting the leading-strings in which grown gentlemen are kept by despotism:

"For more than half an hour I had been indolently watching this amphibious scene, when the landlord entering my room said, that the Russian Prince G———n, wished to speak to me on some business; and the information was scarcely communicated, when I perceived his Highness standing at the threshold of my door. With the attention due to his rank, I instantly begged he would do me the honour to walk in; and, after we had sufficiently bowed to each other, and that I had prevailed on my guest to sit down, I gravely requested him, as I stood before him, to be so good as to state in what way I could have the good fortune to render him any service. The Prince very briefly replied, that he had called upon me, considering that I was the person in the hotel best capable (he politely inclined his head) of informing him by what route it would be most advisable for him to proceed to London, it being his wish to visit my country.

"In order at once to solve this very simple problem, I silently unfolded and spread out upon the table my map of Europe; and each of us, as we leant over it, placing a forefinger on or near Wiesbaden, (our eyes being fixed upon Dover,) we remained in this reflecting attitude for some seconds, until the Prince's finger first solemnly began to trace its route. In doing this, I observed that his Highness's hand kept swerving far into the Netherlands, so gently pulling it by the thumb towards Paris, I used as much force as I thought decorous to induce it to advance in a straight line; however, finding my efforts ineffectual, I ventured, with respectful astonishment, to ask, 'Why travel by so uninteresting a route?'

"The Prince at once acknowledged that the route I had recommended would, by visiting Paris, afford him the greatest pleasure; but he frankly told me that no Russian, not even a personage of his rank, could enter that capital, without first obtaining a written permission from the Emperor.

"These words were no sooner uttered, than I felt my fluent civility suddenly begin to coagulate; the attention I paid my guest became forced and unnatural. I was no longer at my ease; and though I bowed, strained, and endeavoured to be, if possible, more respectful than ever, yet I really could hardly prevent my lips from muttering aloud, that I had sooner die a homely English peasant than live to be a Russian prince!—in short, his Highness's words acted upon my mind like thunder upon beer. And, moreover, I could almost have sworn that I was an old lean wolf, contemptuously observing a bald ring rubbed by the collar, from the neck of a sleek, well-fed mastiff dog; however, recovering myself, I managed to give as much information as it was in my humble power to afford; and my noble guest then taking his departure, I returned to my open window, to give vent in solitude (as I gazed upon the horse-path) to my own reflection upon the subject.

"Although the petty rule of my life has been never to trouble myself about what the world calls 'politics'—(a fine word by the by, much easier expressed than understood)—yet, I must own, I am always happy when I see a nation enjoying itself, and melancholy when I observe any large body of people suffering pain or imprisonment. But, of all sorts of imprisonment, that of the mind is, to my taste, the most cruel; and, therefore, when I consider over what immense dominions the Emperor of Russia presides, and how he governs, I cannot help sympathizing most sincerely with those innocent sufferers, who have the misfortune to be born his subjects; for if a Russian prince be not freely permitted to go to Paris, in what a melancholy state of slavery and abasement must exist the minds of what we call the lower classes?

"As a sovereign remedy for this lamentable political disorder, many very sensible people in England prescribe, I know, that we ought to have recourse to arms. I must confess, however, it seems to me that one of the greatest political errors England could commit would be to declare, or to join in declaring, war with Russia; in short, that an appeal to brute force would, at this moment, be at once most unscientifically to stop an immense moral engine, which, if left to its work, is quite powerful enough, without bloodshed, to gain for humanity, at no expense at all, its object. The individual who is, I conceive, to overthrow the

Emperor of Russia—who is to direct his own legions against himself—who is to do what Napoleon had at the head of his great army failed to effect, is the little child, who, lighted by the single wick of a small lamp, sits at this moment perched above the great steam press of the 'Penny Magazine,' feeding it from morning till night, with blank papers, which at almost every pulsation of the engine, comes out stamped on both sides with engravings, and with pages of plain, useful, harmless knowledge, which, by making the lower orders acquainted with foreign lands, foreign productions, various states of society, &c., tend practically to inculcate 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace—good will towards men.' It has already been stated, that what proceeds from this press, is now greedily devoured by the people of Europe; indeed, even at Berlin, we know it can hardly be reprinted fast enough.

"This child, then,—'this sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,'—is the only army that an enlightened country like ours should, I humbly think, deign to oppose to one who reigns in darkness—who trembles at daylight, and whose throne rests upon ignorance and despotism. Compare this mild, peaceful, intellectual policy, with the dreadful, savage alternative of going to war, and the difference must surely be evident to every one. In the former case, we calmly enjoy, first of all, the pleasing reflection, that our country is generously imparting to the nations of Europe the blessing she is tranquilly deriving from the purification of civilization to her own mind;—far from wishing to exterminate, we are gradually illuminating the Russian peasant; we are mildly throwing a gleam of light upon the fetters of the Russian prince; and surely every well-disposed person must see, that if we will only have patience, the result of this noble, temperate conduct must produce all that reasonable beings can desire."—*Bubbles from the Brunnens of Nassau*, p. 164.

By the "Penny Magazine" our author means, of course, not only that excellent publication, but all cheaply-diffused knowledge—all the tranquil and enlightening deeds of "Captain Pen" in general—of whom it is pleasant to see the gallant Major so useful a servant, the more so from his sympathies with rank and the aristocracy. But "Pen" will make it a matter of necessity, by-and-by, for all ranks to agree with him, in vindication of their own wit and common sense; and when once this necessity is felt, and fastidiousness shall find out that it will be considered "absurd" to lag behind in the career of knowledge and the common good, the cause of the world is secure.

May princes and people alike find it out by the kindliest means, and without further violence. May they discover that no one

set of human beings, perhaps no single individual, can be thoroughly secure and content, or enabled to work out his case with equal reasonableness, *till all are so*,—a subject for reflection, which contains, we hope, the beneficent reason *why all are restless*. The solution of the problem is coöperation—the means of solving it is the Press. If the Greeks had had a press, we should probably have heard nothing of the inconsiderate question, which demands, why they, with all their philosophy, did not alter the world? They had not the means. They could not command a general hearing. Neither had Christianity come up, to make men think of one another's wants, as well as of their own accomplishments. Modern times possess those means, and inherit that divine incitement. May every man exert himself accordingly, and show himself a worthy inhabitant of this beautiful and most capable world!

CAPTAIN SWORD AND CAPTAIN PEN.

I.

HOW CAPTAIN SWORD MARCHED TO WAR.

Captain Sword got up one day,
Over the hills to march away,
Over the hills and through the towns;
They heard him coming across the downs,
Stepping in music and thunder sweet,
Which his drums sent before him into the street,
And lo! 'twas a beautiful sight in the sun;
For first came his foot, all marching like one,
With tranquil faces, and bristling steel,
And the flag full of honour as though it could feel,
And the officers gentle, the sword that hold
'Gainst the shoulder heavy with trembling gold,
And the massy tread, that in passing is heard,
Though the drums and the music say never a word.

And then came his horse, a clustering sound,
Of shapely potency, forward bound,
Glossy black steeds, and riders tall,
Rank after rank, each looking like all,
Midst moving repose and a threatening charm,
With mortal sharpness at each right arm,
And hues that painters and ladies love,
And ever the small flag blush'd above.

And ever and anon the kettle drums beat
Hasty power midst order meet;
And ever and anon the drums and fifes
Came like motion's voice, and life's;
Or into the golden grandeurs fell
Of deeper instruments, mingling well,
Burdens of beauty for winds to bear;
And the cymbals kiss'd in the shining air,

And the trumpets their visible voices rear'd,
Each looking forth with its tapestried beard,
Bidding the heavens and earth make way
For Captain Sword and his battle-array.

He, nevertheless, rode indifferent-eyed,
As if pomp were a toy to his manly pride,
Whilst the ladies loved him the more for his scorn,
And thought him the noblest man ever was born,
And tears came into the bravest eyes,
And hearts swell'd after him double their size,
And all that was weak, and all that was strong,
Seem'd to think wrong's self in him could not be wrong,
Such love, though with bosom about to be gored,
Did sympathy get for brave Captain Sword.

So, half that night, as he stopp'd in the town,
'Twas all one dance going merrily down,
With lights in windows and love in eyes,
And a constant feeling of sweet surprise;
But all the next morning 'twas tears and sighs;
For the sound of his drums grew less and less,
Walking like carelessness off from distress;
And Captain Sword went whistling gay,
"Over the hills and far away."

II.

HOW CAPTAIN SWORD WON A GREAT VICTORY.

Through fair and through foul went Captain Sword,
Pacer of highway and piercer of ford,
Steady of face in rain or sun,
He and his merry men, all as one;
Till they came to a place, where in battle-array
Stood thousands of faces firm as they,
Waiting to see which could best maintain
Bloody argument, lords of pain;
And down the throats of their fellow-men
Thrust the draught never drunk again.

It was a spot of rural peace,
Ripening with the year's increase,
And singing in the sun with birds,
Like a maiden with happy words—
With happy words which she scarcely hears
In her own contented ears,
Such abundance feeleth she
Of all comfort carelessly,
Throwing round her, as she goes,
Sweet half thoughts on lily and rose,
Nor guesseth what will soon arouse
All ears—that murder's in the house;
And that, in some strange wrong of brain,
Her father hath her mother slain.

Steady! steady! The masses of men
Wheel, and fall in, and wheel again,
Softly as circles drawn with pen.

Then a gaze there was, and valour, and fear,
And the jest that died in the jester's ear,
And preparation, noble to see,
Of all-accepting mortality;
Tranquil Necessity gracing Force;
And the trumpets danced with the stirring horse;
And lordly voices, here and there,
Call'd to war through the gentle air;
When suddenly, with its voice of doom
Spoke the cannon 'twixt glare and gloom,
Making wider the dreadful room:
On the faces of nations round
Fell the shadow of that sound.

Death for death! The storm begins;
Rush the drums in a torrent of dins;
Crash the muskets, gash the swords;
Shoes grow red in a thousand fords;
Now for the flint, and the cartridge bite;
Darkly gathers the breath of the fight,
Salt to the palate, and stinging to sight,

Muskets are pointed they scarce know where;
No matter: Murder is cluttering there.
Reel the hollows: close up! close up!
Death feeds thick, and his food is his cup.
Down go bodies, snap burst eyes;
Trod on the ground are tender cries;
Brains are dash'd against plashing ears;
Hah! no time has battle for tears;
Cursing helps better—cursing, that goes
Slipping through friends' blood, athirst for foes'.
What have soldiers with tears to do?—
We, who this mad-house must now go through,
This twenty-fold Bedlam, let loose with knives—
To murder, and stab, and grow liquid with lives—
Gasping, staring, treading red mud,
Till the drunkenness' self makes us steady of blood?[13]

[Oh! shrink not thou, reader! Thy part's in it, too;
Has not thy praise made the thing they go through,
Shocking to read of, but noble to do?]

No time to be "breather of thoughtful breath"
Has the giver and taker of dreadful death.
See where comes the horse-tempest again,
Visible earthquake, bloody of mane!
Part are upon us, with edges of pain;
Part burst, riderless, over the plain,
Crashing their spurs, and twice slaying the slain.[14]
See, by the living God! see those foot
Charging down hill—hot, hurried, and mute!
They loll their tongues out! Ah-hah! pell-mell!
Horses roll in a human hell;
Horse and man they climb one another—
Which is the beast, and which is the brother?[15]
Mangling, stifling, stopping shrieks
With the tread of torn-out cheeks,
Drinking each other's bloody breath—
Here's the fleshliest feast of Death.
An odour, as of a slaughter-house,
The distant raven's dark eye bows.[16]

Victory! victory! Man flies man;
Cannibal patience hath done what it can—
Carved, and been carved, drunk the drinkers down,
And now there is one that hath won the crown;—
One pale visage stands lord of the board—
Joy to the trumpets of Captain Sword!

His trumpets blow strength, his trumpets neigh,
They and his horse, and waft him away;
They and his foot, with a tired proud flow,
Tatter'd escapers and givers of woe.
Open, ye cities! Hats off! hold breath!
To see the man who has been with Death;
To see the man who determineth right
By the virtue-perplexing virtue of might.
Sudden before him have ceased the drums,
And lo! in the air of empire he comes.

All things present, in earth and sky,
Seem to look at his looking eye.

III.

OF THE BALL THAT WAS GIVEN TO CAPTAIN SWORD.

But Captain Sword was a man among men,
And he hath become their playmate again:
Boot, nor sword, nor stern look hath he,
But holdeth the hand of a fair ladye,
And floweth the dance a palace within,
Half the night, to a golden din,
Midst lights in windows and love in eyes,
And a constant feeling of sweet surprise;
And ever the look of Captain Sword
Is the look that's thank'd, and the look that's adored.

There was the country-dance, small of taste;
And the waltz, that loveth the lady's waist;
And the galopade, strange agreeable tramp,
Made of a scrape, a hobble, and stamp;

And the high-stepping minuet, face to face,
Mutual worship of conscious grace;
And all the shapes in which beauty goes
Weaving motion with blithe repose.

And then a table a feast display'd,
Like a garden of light without a shade,
All of gold, and flowers, and sweets,
With wines of old church-lands, and sylvan meats,
Food that maketh the blood feel choice;
Yet all the face of the feast, and the voice,
And heart, still turn'd to the head of the board;
For ever the look of Captain Sword
Is the look that's thank'd, and the look that's adored.

Well content was Captain Sword;
At his feet all wealth was pour'd;
On his head all glory set;
For his ease all comfort met;
And around him seem'd entwined
All the arms of womankind.

And when he had taken his fill
Thus, of all that pampereth will,
In his down he sunk to rest
Clasp'd in dreams of all its best.

IV.

ON WHAT TOOK PLACE ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE THE NIGHT AFTER THE VICTORY.

'Tis a wild night out of doors;
The wind is mad upon the moors,
And comes into the rocking town,
Stabbing all things, up and down,
And then there is a weeping rain
Huddling 'gainst the window-pane,
And good men bless themselves in bed;
The mother brings her infant's head

Closer, with a joy like tears,
And thinks of angels in her prayers;
Then sleeps, with his small hand in hers.

Two loving women, lingering yet
Ere the fire is out, are met,
Talking sweetly, time-beguiled,
One of her bridegroom, one her child,
The bridegroom he. They have received
Happy letters, more believed
For public news, and feel the bliss
The heavenlier on a night like this.
They think him housed, they think him blest,
Curtain'd in the core of rest,
Danger distant, all good near;
Why hath their "Good night" a tear?

Behold him! By a ditch he lies
Clutching the wet earth, his eyes
Beginning to be mad. In vain
His tongue still thirsts to lick the rain,
That mock'd but now his homeward tears;
And ever and anon he rears
His legs and knees with all their strength,
And then as strongly thrusts at length.
Raised, or stretch'd, he cannot bear
The wound that girds him, weltering there:
And "Water!" he cries, with moonward stare.[17]

["I will not read it!" with a start,
Burning cries some honest heart;
"I will not read it! Why endure
Pangs which horror cannot cure?
Why—Oh why? and rob the brave,
And the bereaved, of all they crave,
A little hope to gild the grave?"

Ask'st thou why, thou honest heart?
'Tis *because* thou dost ask, and *because* thou dost start.

'Tis because thine own praise and fond outward thought
Have aided the shows which this sorrow has wrought.]

A wound unutterable—O God!
Mingles his being with the sod.

["I'll read no more."—Thou must, thou must:
In thine own pang doth wisdom trust.]

His nails are in earth, his eyes in air,
And "Water!" he crieth—he may not forbear.
Brave and good was he, yet now he dreams
The moon looks cruel; and he blasphemes.

["No more! no more!" Nay, this is but one;
Were the whole tale told, it would not be done
From wonderful setting to rising sun.
But God's good time is at hand—be calm,
Thou reader! and steep thee in all thy balm
Of tears or patience, of thought or good will,
For the field—the field awaiteth us still.]

"Water! water!" all over the field:
To nothing but Death will that wound-voice yield.
One, as he crieth, is sitting half bent;
What holds he so close?—his body is rent.
Another is mouthless, with eyes on cheek;
Unto the raven he may not speak.
One would fain kill him; and one half round
The place where he writhes, hath up-beaten the ground.
Like a mad horse hath he beaten the ground,
And the feathers and music that litter it round,
The gore, and the mud, and the golden sound.
Come hither, ye cities! ye ball-rooms, take breath!
See what a floor hath the Dance of Death![18]

The floor is alive, though the lights are out;
What are those dark shapes, flitting about?
Flitting about, yet no ravens they,
Not foes, yet not friends,—mute creatures of prey;

Their prey is lucre, their claws a knife,
Some say they take the beseeching life.
Horrible pity is theirs for despair,
And they the love-sacred limbs leave bare.[19]
Love will come to-morrow, and sadness,
Patient for the fear of madness,
And shut its eyes for cruelty,
So many pale beds to see.
Turn away, thou Love, nor weep
More in covering his last sleep;
Thou *hast* him:—blessed is thine eye!
Friendless Famine has yet to die.[20]

A shriek!—Great God! what superhuman
Peal was that? Not man, nor woman,
Nor twenty madmen, crush'd, could wreak
Their soul in such a ponderous shriek.
Dumbly, for an instant, stares
The field; and creep men's dying hairs.

O friend of man! O noble creature!
Patient and brave, and mild by nature,
Mild by nature, and mute as mild,
Why brings he to these passes wild,
Thee, gentle horse, thou shape of beauty?
Could he not do his dreadful duty,
(If duty it be, which seems mad folly)
Nor link thee to his melancholy?

Two noble steeds lay side by side,
One cropp'd the meek grass ere it died;
Pang-struck it struck t'other, already torn,
And out of its bowels that shriek was born.[21]

Now see what crawleth, well as it may,
Out of the ditch, and looketh that way.
What horror all black, in the sick moonlight,
Kneeling, half human, a burthensome sight;
Loathly and liquid, as fly from a dish;
Speak, Horror! thou, for it withereth flesh.

" The grass caught fire; the wounded were by;
Writhing till eve did a remnant lie;
Then feebly this coal abateth his cry;
But he hopeth! he hopeth! joy lighteth his eye,
For gold he possesseth, and Murder is nigh!" [22]

O goodness in horror! O ill not all ill!
In the worst of the worst may be fierce Hope still.
To-morrow with dawn will come many a wain,
And bear away loads of human pain,
Piles of pale beds for the 'spitals; but some
Again will awake in home-mornings, and some,
Dull herds of the war, again follow the drum.
From others, faint blood shall in families flow,
With wonder at life, and young oldness in woe,
Yet hence may the movers of great earth grow.[23]
Now, even now, I hear them at hand,
Though again Captain Sword is up in the land,
Marching anew for more fields like these
In the health of his flag in the morning breeze.

Sneereth the trumpet, and stampeth the drum,
And again Captain Sword in his pride doth come;
He passeth the fields where his friends lie lorn,
Feeding the flowers and the feeding corn,[24]
Where under the sunshine cold they lie,
And he hasteth a tear from his old gray eye.[25]
Small thinking is his but of work to be done,
And onward he marcheth, using the sun:
He slayeth, he wasteth, he spouteth his fires
On babes at the bosom, and bed-rid sires;[26]
He bursteth pale cities, through smoke and through yell,
And bringeth behind him, hot-blooded, his hell.
Then the weak door is barr'd and the soul all sore,
And hand-wringing helplessness paceth the floor,
And the lover is slain, and the parents are nigh—[27]

Oh God! let me breathe, and look up at thy sky!
Good is as hundreds, evil as one;
Round about goeth the golden sun.

V.

HOW CAPTAIN SWORD, IN CONSEQUENCE OF HIS GREAT VICTORIES, BECAME INFIRM IN HIS WITS.

But to win at the game, whose moves are death,
It maketh a man draw too proud a breath:
And to see his force taken for reason and right,
It tendeth to unsettle his reason quite.
Never did chief of the line of Sword
Keep his wits whole at that drunken board.
He taketh the size, and the roar, and fate,
Of the field of his action, for soul as great:
He smiteth and stunneth the cheek of mankind,
And saith, "Lo! I rule both body and mind."

Captain Sword forgot his own soul,
Which of aught save itself resented control;
Which whatever his deeds, ordained them still,
Bodiless monarch, enthroned in his will:
He forgot the close thought, and the burning heart,
And pray'rs, and the mild moon hanging apart,
Which lifted the seas with her gentle looks,
And growth, and death, and immortal books,
And the Infinite Mildness, the soul of souls,
Which layeth earth soft 'twixt her silver poles;
Which ruleth the stars, and saith not a word;
Whose speed in the hair of no comet is heard;
Which sendeth the soft sun, day by day,
Mighty and genial, and just alway,
Owning no difference, doing no wrong,
Loving the orbs and the least bird's song,
The great, sweet, warm angel, with golden rod,
Bright with the smile of the distance of God.

Captain Sword, like a witless thing,
Of all under heaven must needs be a king,
King of kings, and lord of lords,
Swayer of souls as well as of swords,
Ruler of speech, and through speech, of thought,
And hence to his brain was a madness brought.

He madden'd in East, he madden'd in West,
Fiercer for sights of men's unrest,
Fiercer for talk, amongst awful men,
Of their new mighty leader, Captain Pen,
A conqueror strange, who sat in his home
Like the wizard that plagued the ships of Rome,
Noiseless, showless, dealing no death,
But victories, winged, went forth from his breath.

Three thousand miles across the waves [28]
Did Captain Sword cry, bidding souls be slaves:
Three thousand miles did the echo return
With a laugh and a blow made his old cheeks burn.

Then he call'd to a wrong-madden'd people, and swore [29]
Their name in the map should never be more:
Dire came the laugh, and smote worse than before.
Were earthquake a giant, up-thrusting his head
And o'erlooking the nations, not worse were the dread.

Then, lo! was a wonder, and sadness to see;
For with that very people, their leader, stood he,
Incarnate afresh, like a Cæsar of old; [30]
But because he look'd back, and his heart was cold,
Time, hope, and himself for a tale he sold.
Oh largest occasion, by man ever lost!
Oh throne of the world to the war-dogs tost!

He vanish'd; and thinly there stood in his place
The new shape of Sword, with an humbler face, [31]
Rebuking his brother, and preaching for right,
Yet ay when it came, standing proud on his might,
And squaring its claims with his old small sight;
Then struck up his drums, with ensign furl'd,
And said, "I will walk through a subject world:
Earth, just as it is, shall for ever endure,
The rich be too rich, and the poor too poor;
And for this I'll stop knowledge. I'll say to it, 'Flow
Thus far: but presume no farther to flow:
For me, as I list, shall the free airs blow.'"

Laugh'd after him loudly that land so fair,[32]
"The king thou sett'st over us, by a free air
Is swept away, senseless." And old Sword then
First knew the might of great Captain Pen.
So strangely it bow'd him, so wilder'd his brain,
That now he stood, hatless, renouncing his reign;
Now mutter'd of dust laid in blood; and now
'Twixt wonder and patience went lifting his brow.
Then suddenly came he with gowned men,
And said, "Now observe me—*I'm* Captain Pen:
I'll lead all your changes—I'll write all your books—
I'm everything—all things—I'm clergymen, cooks,
Clerks, carpenters, hosiers,—I'm Pitt—I'm Lord Grey."

'Twas painful to see his extravagant way;
But heart ne'er so bold, and hand ne'er so strong,
What are they, when truth and the wits go wrong?

VI.

OF CAPTAIN PEN, AND HOW HE FOUGHT WITH CAPTAIN SWORD.

Now tidings of Captain Sword and his state
Were brought to the ears of Pen the Great,
Who rose and said, "His time is come."
And he sent him, but not by sound of drum,
Nor trumpet, nor other hasty breath,
Hot with questions of life and death,
But only a letter calm and mild;
And Captain Sword he read it, and smiled,
And said, half in scorn, and nothing in fear,
(Though his wits seem'd restor'd by a danger near,
For brave was he ever), "Let Captain Pen,
Bring at his back a million men,
And I'll talk with his wisdom, and not till then."
Then replied to his messenger Captain Pen,
"I'll bring at my back a *world* of men."

Out laugh'd the captains of Captain Sword,
But their chief look'd vex'd, and said not a word,
For thought and trouble had touch'd his ears
Beyond the bullet-like sense of theirs,

And wherever he went, he was 'ware of a sound
Now heard in the distance, now gathering round,
Which irk'd him to know what the issue might be;
But the soul of the cause of it well guess'd he.

Indestructible souls among men
Were the souls of the line of Captain Pen;
Sages, patriots, martyrs mild,
Going to the stake, as child
Goeth with his prayer to bed;
Dungeon-beams, from quenchless head;
Poets, making earth aware
Of its wealth in good and fair;
And the benders to their intent,
Of metal and of element;
Of flame the enlightener, beauteous,
And steam, that bursteth his iron house;
And adamantine giants blind,
That, without master, have no mind.

Heir to these, and all their store,
Was Pen, the power unknown of yore;
And as their might still created might,
And each work'd for him by day and by night,
In wealth and wondrous means he grew,
Fit to move the earth anew;
Till his fame began to speak
Pause, as when the thunders wake,
Muttering in the beds of heaven:
Then, to set the globe more even,
Water he call'd, and Fire, and Haste,
Which hath left old Time displaced—
And Iron, mightiest now for Pen,
Each of his steps like an army of men—
(Sword little knew what was leaving him then)
And out of the witchcraft of their skill,
A creature he call'd to wait on his will—
Half iron, half vapour, a dread to behold—
Which evermore panted and evermore roll'd,
And uttered his words a million fold.

Forth sprang they in air, down raining like dew,
And men fed upon them, and mighty they grew.

Ears giddy with custom that sound might not hear,
But it woke up the rest, like an earthquake near;
And that same night of the letter, some strange
Compulsion of soul brought a sense of change;
And at midnight the sound grew into a roll
As the sound of all gath'rings from pole to pole,
From pole unto pole, and from clime to clime,
Like the roll of the wheels of the coming of time;—
A sound as of cities, and sound as of swords
Sharpening, and solemn and terrible words,
And laughter as solemn, and thunderous drumming,
A tread as if all the world were coming.
And then was a lull, and soft voices sweet
Call'd into music those terrible feet,
Which rising on wings, lo! the earth went round
To the burn of their speed with a golden sound;
With a golden sound, and a swift repose,
Such as the blood in the young heart knows;
Such as Love knows, when his tumults cease;
When all is quick, and yet all is at peace.

And when Captain Sword got up next morn,
Lo! a new-faced world was born;
For not an anger nor pride would it show,
Nor aught of the loftiness now found low,
Nor would his own men strike a single blow:
Not a blow for their old, unconsidering lord
Would strike the good soldiers of Captain Sword;
But weaponless all, and wise they stood,
In the level dawn, and calm brotherly good;
Yet bowed to him they, and kiss'd his hands,
For such were their new good lord's commands,
Lessons rather, and brotherly plea;
Reverence the past, O brothers, quoth he;
Reverence the struggle and mystery,
And faces human in their pain;
Nor his the least that could sustain
Cares of mighty wars, and guide
Calmly where the red deaths ride.

"But how! what now?" cried Captain Sword;
"Not a blow for your gen'ral? not even a word?
What! traitors? deserters?"

"Ah no!" cried they;
"But the 'game's' at an end; the 'wise' won't play."

"And where's your old spirit?"

"The same, though another;
Man may be strong without maiming his brother."

"But enemies?"

"Enemies! Whence should they come,
When all interchange what was but known to some?"

"But famine? but plague? worse evils by far."

"O last mighty rhet'ric to charm us to war!
Look round—what has earth, now it equably speeds,
To do with these foul and calamitous needs?
Now it equably speeds, and thoughtfully glows,
And its heart is open, never to close?"

"Still I can govern," said Captain Sword;
"Fate I respect; and I stick to my word."
And in truth so he did; but the word was one
He had sworn to all vanities under the sun,
To do, for their conq'rors, the least could be done.
Besides, what had *he* with his worn-out story,
To do with the cause he had wrong'd, and the glory?

No! Captain Sword a sword was still,
He could not unteach his lordly will;
He could not attemper his single thought;
It might not be bent, nor newly wrought:
And so, like the tool of a disused art,
He stood at his wall, and rusted apart.

'Twas only for many-soul'd Captain Pen
To make a world of swordless men.

ABOU BEN ADHEM.

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?"—The vision rais'd its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answer'd, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

The angel wrote, and vanish'd. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show'd the names whom love of God had bless'd,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

JAFFÀR.

INSCRIBED TO THE MEMORY OF SHELLEY.

Shelley, take this to thy dear memory;—
To praise the generous, is to think of thee.

Jaffàr, the Barmecide, the good Vizier,
The poor man's hope, the friend without a peer,
Jaffàr was dead, slain by a doom unjust;
And guilty Hàroun, sullen with mistrust
Of what the good and e'en the bad might say,
Ordain'd that no man living from that day
Should dare to speak his name on pain of death.—
All Araby and Persia held their breath.

All but the brave Mondeer.—He, proud to show
How far for love a grateful soul could go,
And facing death for very scorn and grief
(For his great heart wanted a great relief,)
Stood forth in Bagdad, daily in the square
Where once had stood a happy house; and there
Harangued the tremblers at the scymitar
On all they owed to the divine Jaffàr.

"Bring me this man," the caliph cried. The man
Was brought—was gaz'd upon. The mutes began
To bind his arms. "Welcome, brave cords," cried he;
"From bonds far worse Jaffàr deliver'd me;
From wants, from shames, from loveless household fears;
Made a man's eyes friends with delicious tears;
Restor'd me—lov'd me—put me on a par
With his great self. How can I pay Jaffàr?"

Hàroun, who felt that on a soul like this
The mightiest vengeance could but fall amiss,
Now deign'd to smile, as one great lord of fate
Might smile upon another half as great.
He said, "Let worth grow frenzied, if it will;
The caliph's judgment shall be master still.
Go: and since gifts thus move thee, take this gem,
The richest in the Tartar's diadem,
And hold the giver as thou deemest fit."

"Gifts!" cried the friend. He took; and holding it
High tow'rds the heavens, as though to meet his star,
Exclaim'd "This too I owe to thee, Jaffàr."

THE BITTER GOURD.[33]

Lokman the Wise, therefore the Good (for wise
Is but sage good, seeing with final eyes),
Was slave once to a lord, jealous though kind,
Who, piqued sometimes at the man's master mind,

Gave him, one day, to see how he would treat
So strange a grace, a bitter gourd to eat.

With simplest reverence, and no surprise,
The sage receiv'd what stretch'd the donor's eyes;
And, piece by piece, as though it had been food
To feast and gloat on, every morsel chew'd;
And so stood eating, with his patient beard,
Till all the nauseous favour disappear'd.

Vex'd, and confounded, and dispos'd to find
Some ground of scorn, on which to ease his mind,
"Lokman!" exclaim'd his master,—"In God's name,
Where could the veriest slave get soul so tame?
Have all my favours been bestow'd amiss?
Or could not brains like thine have saved thee this?"

Calmly stood Lokman still, as duty stands.—
"Have I receiv'd," he answered, "at thine hands
Favours so sweet they went to mine heart's root,
And could I not accept one bitter fruit?"

"O Lokman!" said his lord (and as he spoke,
For very love his words in softness broke),
"Take but this favour yet:—be slave no more:—
Be, as thou art, my friend and counsellor:
Oh be; nor let me quit thee, self-abhorr'd;—
'Tis I that am the slave, and thou the lord."

THE INEVITABLE.

INSCRIBED TO JOHN FORSTER.

FORSTER, whose voice can speak of awe so well,
And stern disclosures, new and terrible,
This were a tale, my friend, for thee to tell.
Seek for it then in some old book; but take
Meantime this version, for the writer's sake.

The royal sage, lord of the Magic Ring,
Solomon, once upon a morn in spring,
By Cedron, in his garden's rosiest walk,
Was pacing with a pleasant guest in talk,
When they beheld, approaching, but with face
Yet undiscern'd, a stranger in the place.

How he came there, what wanted, who could be,
How dare, unusher'd, beard such privacy,
Whether 'twas some great Spirit of the Ring,
And if so, why he should thus daunt the king
(For the ring's master, after one sharp gaze,
Stood waiting, more in trouble than amaze),
All this the courtier would have ask'd; but fear
Palsied his utterance, as the man drew near.

The stranger seem'd (to judge him by his dress)
One of mean sort, a dweller with distress,
Or some poor pilgrim; but the steps he took
Belied it with strange greatness; and his look
Open'd a page in a tremendous book.

He wore a cowl, from under which there shone,
Full on the guest, and on the guest alone,
A face, not of this earth, half veil'd in gloom
And radiance, but with eyes like lamps of doom,
Which, ever as they came, before them sent
Rebuke, and staggering, and astonishment,
With sense of change, and worse of change to be,
Sore sighing, and extreme anxiety,
And feebleness, and faintness, and moist brow,
The past a scoff, the future crying "Now!"
All that makes wet the pores, and lifts the hair;
All that makes dying vehemence despair,
Knowing it must be dragg'd it knows not where.

Th' excess of fear and anguish, which had tied
The courtier's tongue, now loos'd it, and he cried,
"O royal master! Sage! Lord of the Ring,
I cannot bear the horror of this thing;

Help with thy mighty art. Wish me, I pray,
On the remotest mountain of Cathay."

Solomon wish'd, and the man vanish'd. Straight
Up comes the terror, with his orbs of fate.

"Solomon," with a lofty voice said he,
"How came that man here, wasting time with thee?
I was to fetch him, ere the close of day,
From the remotest mountain of Cathay."

Solomon said, bowing him to the ground,
"Angel of Death, there will the man be found."

WALLACE AND FAWDON.

This ballad was suggested by one of the notes to the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Wallace, the great Scottish patriot, had been defeated in a sharp encounter with the English. He was forced to retreat with only sixteen followers; the English pursued him with a bloodhound; and his sole chance of escape from that tremendous investigator was either in baffling the scent altogether (which was impossible, unless fugitives could take to the water, and continue there for some distance), or in confusing it by the spilling of blood. For the latter purpose, a captive was sometimes sacrificed; in which case the hound stopped upon the body.

The supernatural part of the story of Fawdon is treated by its first relator, Harry the Minstrel, as a mere legend, and that not a very credible one; but as a mere legend it is very fine, and quite sufficient for poetical purposes; nor should the old poet's philosophy have thought proper to gainsay it. Nevertheless, as the mysteries of the conscience are more awful things than any merely gratuitous terror (besides leaving optical phenomena quite as real as the latter may find them), even the supernatural part of the story becomes probable when we consider the agitations which the noble mind of Wallace may have undergone during such trying physical circumstances, and such extremes of moral responsibility. It seems clear, that however necessary the death of Fawdon may have been to his companions, or to Scotland, his slayer regretted it; I have suggested the kind of reason which he would most likely have had for the regret; and upon the whole, it is my opinion, that Wallace actually saw the visions, and that the legend originated in the fact. I do not mean to imply that Fawdon became present, embodied or disembodied, whatever may have been the case with his image. I only say that what the legend reports Wallace to have seen, was actually in the hero's eyes. The remainder of the question I leave to the psychologist.

PART THE FIRST.

Wallace with his sixteen men
Is on his weary way;
They have hasting been all night,
And hasting been all day;
And now, to lose their only hope,
They hear the bloodhound bay.

The bloodhound's bay comes down the wind,
Right upon the road;
Town and tower are yet to pass,
With not a friend's abode.

Wallace neither turn'd nor spake;
Closer drew the men;
Little had they said that day,
But most went cursing then.

Oh! to meet twice sixteen foes
Coming from English ground,
And leave their bodies on the track,
To cheat King Edward's hound.

Oh! to overtake one wretch
That left them in the fight,
And leave him cloven to the ribs,
To mock the bloody spite.

Suddenly dark Fawdon stopp'd,
As they near'd a town;
He stumbled with a desperate oath,
And cast him fiercely down.

He said, "The leech took all my strength,
My body is unblest;
Come dog, come devil, or English rack,
Here must Fawdon rest."

Fawdon was an Irishman
Had join'd them in the war;
Four orphan children waited him
Down by Eden Scawr.

But Wallace hated Fawdon's ways,
That were both fierce and shy;
And at his words he turn'd, and said,
"That's a traitor's lie.

"No thought is thine of lingering here,
A captive for the hound;
Thine eye is bright; thy lucky flesh
Hath not a single wound;
The moment we depart, the lane
Will see thee from the ground."

Fawdon would not speak nor stir,
Speak as any might;
Scorn'd or sooth'd, he sat and lour'd,
As though in angry spite.

Wallace drew a little back,
And waved his men apart;
And Fawdon half leap'd up and cried,
"Thou wilt not have the heart!"

Wallace with his dreadful sword,
Without further speech,
Clean cut off dark Fawdon's head,
Through its stifled screech:

Through its stifled screech, and through
The arm that fenc'd his brow;
And Fawdon, as he leap'd, fell dead,
And safe is Wallace now.

Safe is Wallace with his men,
And silent is the hound;
And on their way to Castle Gask
They quit the sullen ground.

PART THE SECOND.

Wallace lies in Castle Gask,
Safely with his men;
Not a soul has come, three days,
Within the warder's ken.

Safely with his men lies Wallace,
Yet he fareth ill;
There is fever in his blood;
His mind may not be still.

It was night, and all were housed,
Talking long and late;
Who is this that blows the horn
At the castle-gate?

Who is this that blows a horn
Which none but Wallace hears?
Loud and louder grows the blast
In his frenzied ears.

He sends by twos, he sends by threes,
He sends them all to learn;
He stands upon the stairs, and calls,
But none of them return.

Wallace flings him forth down stairs;
And there the moonlight fell
Across the yard upon a sight,
That makes him seem in hell.

Fawdon's headless trunk he sees,
With an arm in air,
Brandishing his bloody head
By the swinging hair.

Wallace with a stifled screech
Turn'd and fled amain,
Up the stairs, and through the bowers
With a burning brain:

From a window Wallace leap'd
Fifteen feet to ground,
And never stopp'd till fast within
A nunnery's holy bound.

And then he turn'd, in gasping doubt,
To see the fiend retire,
And saw him not at hand, but saw
Castle Gask on fire.

All on fire was Castle Gask;
And on its top, endued
With the bulk of half a tower,
Headless Fawdon stood.

Wide he held a burning beam,
And blackly fill'd the light;
His body seem'd, by some black art,
To look at Wallace, heart to heart,
Threatening through the night.

Wallace that day week arose
From a feeble bed;
And gentle though he was before,
Yet now to orphans evermore
He gentlier bow'd his head,

KILSPINDIE.[34]

King James to royal Stirling town
Was riding from the chase,
When he was ware of a banish'd man
Return'd without his grace.

The man stood forward from the crowd
In act to make appeal;
Said James, but in no pleasant tone,
"Yonder is my Grey-steel."

" All on fire was Castle Gask—"

Wallace and Fawdon. P. 132.

He knew him not by his attire,
Which was but poor in plight;
He knew him not by his brown curls,
For they were turned to white;

He knew him not by followers,
For want had made them strange;
He knew him by his honest look,
Which time could never change.

Kilspindie was a Douglas bold,
Who, when the king was young,
Had pleas'd him like the grim Grey-steel,
Of whom sweet verse is sung:[35]

Had pleas'd him by his sword that cropp'd
The knights of their renown,
And by a foot so fleet and firm,
No horse could tire it down.

But James hath sworn an angry oath,
That as he was King crown'd,
No Douglas evermore should set
His foot on Scottish ground.

Too bold had been the Douglas race,
Too haughty and too strong;
Only Kilspindie of them all
Had never done him wrong.

"A boon! a boon!" Kilspindie cried;
"Pardon that here am I:
In France I have grown old and sad,
In Scotland I would die."

Kilspindie knelt, Kilspindie bent,
His Douglas pride was gone;
The King he neither spoke nor look'd,
But sternly rode straight on.

Kilspindie rose, and pace for pace
Held on beside the train,
His cap in hand, his looks in hope,
His heart in doubt and pain.

Before them lay proud Stirling hill,
The way grew steep and strong;
The King shook bridle suddenly,
And up swept all the throng.

Kilspindie said within himself,
"He thinks of Auld Lang Syne,
And wishes pleasantly to see
What strength may still be mine."

On rode the court, Kilspindie ran,
His smile grew half distress'd;
There wasn't a man in that company,
Save one, but wish'd him rest.

Still on they rode, and still ran he,
His breath he scarce could get;
There wasn't a man in that company,
Save one, with eyes unwet.

The King has enter'd Stirling town,
Nor ever graced him first;
Kilspindie sat him down, and ask'd
Some water for his thirst.

But they had mark'd the monarch's face,
And how he kept his pride:
And old Kilspindie in his need
Is water's self denied.

Ten weeks thereafter, sever'd still
From Scotland's dear embrace,
Kilspindie died of broken heart,
Sped by that cruel race.

Ten years thereafter, his last breath
King James as sadly drew;
And though he died of many thoughts,
Kilspindie cross'd him too,

THE TRUMPETS OF DOOLKARNEIN.

In Eastern history are two Iskanders, or Alexanders, who are sometimes confounded, and both of whom are called Doolkarnein, or the Two-Horned, in allusion to their subjugation of East and West, horns being an oriental symbol of power.

One of these heroes is Alexander of Macedon, the other a conqueror of more ancient times, who built the marvellous series of ramparts on Mount Caucasus, known in fable as the wall of Gog and Magog, that is to say, of the people of the North. It reached from the Euxine Sea to the Caspian, where its flanks originated the subsequent appellation of the Caspian Gates. See (among other passages in the same work) the article entitled "Jagioug et Magioug," in D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*.

The story of the Trumpets, on which the present poem is founded, is quoted by Major Price, in his *History of the Arabs before the Time of Mahomet*, from the old Italian collection of tales entitled *The Pecorone*, the work of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino.

With awful walls, far glooming, that possess'd
The passes 'twixt the snow-fed Caspian fountains,
Doolkarnein, the dread lord of East and West,
Shut up the northern nations in their mountains;
And upon platforms where the oak-trees grew,
Trumpets he set, huge beyond dreams of wonder,
Craftily purpos'd, when his arms withdrew,
To make him thought still hous'd there, like the thunder:
And it so fell; for when the winds blew right,
They woke their trumpets to their calls of might.

Unseen, but heard, their calls the trumpets blew,
Ringing the granite rocks, their only bearers,
Till the long fear into religion grew,
And never more those heights had human darers.
Dreadful Doolkarnein was an earthly god;
His walls but shadow'd forth his mightier frowning;
Armies of giants at his bidding trod
From realm to realm, king after king discrowning.

When thunder spoke, or when the earthquake stirr'd,
Then, muttering in accord, his host was heard.

But when the winters marr'd the mountain shelves,
And softer changes came with vernal mornings,
Something had touch'd the trumpets' lofty selves,
And less and less rang forth their sovereign warnings:
Fewer and feebler; as when silence spreads
In plague-struck tents, where haughty chiefs, left dying,
Fail by degrees upon their angry beds,
Till, one by one, ceases the last stern sighing.
One by one, thus, their breath the trumpets drew,
Till now no more the imperious music blew.

Is he then dead? Can great Doolkarnein die?
Or can his endless hosts elsewhere be needed?
Were the great breaths that blew his minstrelsy
Phantoms, that faded as himself receded?
Or is he anger'd? Surely he still comes;
This silence ushers the dread visitation;
Sudden will burst the torrent of his drums,
And then will follow bloody desolation.
So did fear dream; though now, with not a sound
To scare good hope, summer had twice crept round.

Then gather'd in a band, with lifted eyes,
The neighbours, and those silent heights ascended.
Giant, nor aught blasting their bold emprize,
They met, though twice they halted, breath suspended;
Once, at a coming like a god's in rage
With thunderous leaps; but 'twas the piled snow, falling;
And once, when in the woods, an oak, for age,
Fell dead, the silence with its groan appalling.
At last they came where still, in dread array,
As though they still might speak, the trumpets lay.

Unhurt they lay, like caverns above ground,
The rifted rocks, for hands, about them clinging,
Their tubes as straight, their mighty mouths as round
And firm, as when the rocks were first set ringing.

Fresh from their unimaginable mould
They might have seem'd, save that the storms had stain'd them
With a rich rust, that now, with gloomy gold
In the bright sunshine, beauteously engrain'd them.
Breathless the gazers look'd, nigh faint for awe,
Then leap'd, then laugh'd. What was it now they saw?

Myriads of birds. Myriads of birds, that fill'd
The trumpets all with nests and nestling voices!
The great, huge, stormy music had been still'd
By the soft needs that nurs'd those small, sweet noises!
O thou Doolkarnein, where is now thy wall?
Where now thy voice divine and all thy forces?
Great was thy cunning, but its wit was small
Compar'd with Nature's least and gentlest courses.
Fears and false creeds may fright the realms awhile;
But Heaven and Earth abide their time, and smile.

BALLADS OF ROBIN HOOD.

(FOR CHILDREN.)

THESE ballads are founded on the popular assumption that the good outlaw Robin Hood, "the gentlest of thieves," as the old historian called him, was of "gentle blood." It is a very good and very probable assumption, considering how the Saxon gentry in his time were robbed of their estates by their Norman tyrants; and it ought never to be more popular than now, when to feel for the sufferings of all classes, and endeavour to advance the whole human race, is a mark of the highest education, that of the sovereign included. The author adopted the metrical license of the old ballads while writing on this subject, but it was not his object to confine himself to their manner.

ROBIN HOOD A CHILD.

IT was the pleasant season yet,
When the stones at cottage doors
Dry quickly while the roads are wet,
After the silver showers.

The green leaves they look'd greener still,
And the thrush, renewing his tune,
Shook a loud note from his gladsome bill
Into the bright blue noon.

Robin Hood's mother look'd out, and said,
"It were a shame and a sin,
For fear of getting a wet head,
To keep such a day within,
Nor welcome up from his sick bed
Your uncle Gamelyn."

And Robin leap'd for mirth and glee,
And so they quit the door,
And "Mother, I'm your dog," quoth he,
And scamper'd on before.

Robin was a gentle boy,
And therewithal as bold;
To say he was his mother's joy,
It were a phrase too cold.

His hair upon his thoughtful brow
Came smoothly clipp'd, and sleek,
But ran into a curl somehow
Beside his merrier cheek.

Great love to him his uncle, too,
The noble Gamelyn bare,
And often said, as his mother knew,
That he should be his heir.

Gamelyn's eyes, now getting dim,
Would twinkle at his sight,
And his ruddy wrinkles laugh at him
Between his locks so white:

For Robin already let him see
He should beat his playmates all
At wrestling, and running, and archery,
For he cared not for a fall.

Now and then his gall arose,
And into a rage he flew;
But 'twas only at such as Tom Harden's blows,
Who, when he had given a bloody nose,
Used to mimic the cock when he crows;
Otherwise Rob laugh'd too.

Merriest he was of merry boys,
And would set the old helmets bobbing:[36]
If his uncle ask'd about the noise,
'Twas "If you please, sir, Robin."

And yet if the old man wish'd no noise,
He'd come and sit at his knee,
And be the gravest of grave-eyed boys,
And not a word spoke he.

So whenever he and his mother came
To brave old Shere Wood Hall,
'Twas nothing there but sport and game,
And holiday folks all:
The servants never were to blame,
Though they let the pasty fall.

And now the travellers turn the road,
And now they hear the rooks;
And there it is,—the old abode,
With all its hearty looks.

Robin laugh'd, and the lady too,
And they look'd at one another;
Says Robin, "I'll knock as I'm used to do
At uncle's window, mother."

And so he pick'd up some pebbles and ran,
And jumping higher and higher,
He reach'd the windows with *tan a ran tan*,
And instead of the kind old white-hair'd man,
There look'd out a fat friar.

" How now," said the fat friar angrily,
" What is this knocking so wild ?"
But when he saw young Robin's eye,
He said, " Go round, my child.

" Go round to the hall, and I'll tell you all."
" He'll tell us all !" thought Robin ;
And his mother and he went quietly,
Though her heart was set a throbbing.

The friar stood in the inner door,
And tenderly said, " I fear
You know not the good squire's no more,
Even Gamelyn Shere.

" Gamelyn of Shere Wood is dead,
He changed but yesternight :"
" Now make us way," the lady said,
" To see that doleful sight."

" Good old Gamelyn Shere is dead,
And has made us his holy heirs :"
The lady stay'd not for all he said,
But went weeping up the stairs.

Robin and she went hand in hand,
Weeping all the way,
Until they came where the lord of that land
Dumb in his cold bed lay.

His hand she took, and saw his dead look,
With the lids over each eye-ball ;
And Robin and she wept as plenteously,
As though he had left them all.

" I will return, Sir Abbot of Vere,
I will return, as is meet,
And see my honour'd brother dear
Laid in his winding sheet.

"And I will stay, for to go were a sin,
For all a woman's tears,
And see the noble Gamelyn
Laid equal with the Veres."

The lady went with a sick heart out
Into the fresh air,
And told her Robin all about
The abbot whom he saw there:

And how his uncle must have been
Disturb'd in his failing sense,
To leave his wealth to these artful men,
At her's and Robin's expense.

Sad was the stately day for all
But the Vere Abbey friars,
When the coffin was stript of its hiding pall,
Amidst the hushing choirs.

Sad was its going down into the dust,
And the thought of the face departed;
The lady shook at them, as shake we must,
And Robin he felt strange-hearted.

That self-same evening, nevertheless,
They return'd to Locksley town,
The lady in a sore distress,
And Robin looking down.

No word he spoke, no note he took
Of bird, or beast, or aught,
Till she ask'd him with a woful look
What made him so full of thought.

"I was thinking, mother," said little Robin,
And with his own voice so true
He spoke right out, "That if I was a king,
Or if I was a man, which is the next thing,
I'd see what those friars do.

"I wouldn't let 'em be counted friars,
If they did as these have done,
But make 'em fight, for rogues and liars;
I'd make 'em fight, to see which was right,
Them, or the mother's son."

His mother stoop'd with a tear of joy,
And she kiss'd him again and again,
And said, "My own little Robin boy,
Thou wilt be a King of Men."

ROBIN HOOD'S FLIGHT.

Robin Hood's mother, these ten years now,
Has been gone from her earthly home;
And Robin has paid, he scarce knew how,
A sum for a noble tomb.

The churchyard lies on a woody hill,
But open to sun and air:
It seems as if the heaven still
Were blessing the good bones there.

Often when Robin turn'd that way,
He look'd through a sweet thin tear;
But he look'd in a different manner, they say,
Towards the Abbey of Vere.

Custom had made him not care for wealth,
Sincere was his mirth at pride;
He had youth, and strength, and health,
And enough for one beside.

But he thought of his gentle mother's cheek,
How it faded and sunk away,
And how she used to grow more weak
And weary every day:

And how, when trying a hymn, her voice
At evening would expire,
How unlike it was the arrogant noise
Of the hard throats in the choir:

And Robin thought too of the poor,
How they toil'd without their share,
And how the alms at the abbey door
But kept them as they were:

And he thought him then of the friars again,
Who rode jingling up and down,
With their trappings and things as fine as the king's,
Though they wore but a shaven crown.

And then of the king bold Robin he thought,
And the homes for his sports undone;
How the poor were turn'd out where his deer were brought,
Yet on body and soul what agonies wrought,
If starving, they killed but one.

And in angry mood, as Robin thus stood,
Digging his bow in the ground,
He was aware in old Shere Wood,
Of a huckster who look'd around.

"And what is Will doing?" said Robin then,
"That he looks so fearful and wan?"
"Oh my dear master that should have been,
I am a weary man."

"A weary man," said Will Nokes, "am I
For unless I pilfer this wood
To sell to the fletchers, for want I shall die
Here in this forest so good.

"Here in this forest where I have been
So happy and so stout,
And like a palfrey on the green,
Have carried yourself about."

"And why, Will Nokes, not come to me?
Why not to Robin, Will?
For I remember thy love and thy glee,
And the scar that marks thee still;

"And not a soul of my uncle's men
To such a pass should come,
While Robin can find in his pocket or bin
A penny or a crumb.

"Stay thee, Will Nokes, man, stay awhile;
And kindle a fire for me."
And into the wood for half a mile,
He has vanish'd instantly.

Robin Hood, with his cheek on fire,
Has drawn his bow so stern,
And a leaping deer, with one leap higher,
Lies motionless in the fern.

Robin, like a proper knight,
As he should have been,
Carv'd a part of the shoulder right,
And bore off a portion clean.

"Oh, what hast thou done, dear master mine,
What hast thou done for me?"
"Roast it, Will, for excepting wine,
Thou shalt feast thee royally."

And Nokes he took and half roasted it,
Blubbering with blinding tears,
And ere he had eaten a second bit,
A trampling came to their ears.

They heard the tramp of a horse's feet,
And they listen'd and kept still,
For Will was feeble, and knelt by the meat;
And Robin he stood by Will.

" Seize him, seize him!" the Abbot cried
With his fat voice through the trees;
Robin a smooth arrow felt and eyed,
And Will jump'd stout with his knees.

Time had made the fat Abbot, I trow,
A fatter and angrier man;
Yet the voice was the same that twelve years ago
Out of the window, to Robin below,
Answer'd the *tan a ran tan.*

" Seize him! seize him!" and now they appear,
The Abbot and foresters three:
" 'Twas I," cried Will, " that slew the deer:"
Says Robin, " Now let not a man come near,
Or he's dead as dead can be."

But on they came, and with gullet cleft
The first one met the shaft;
And he fell with a face of all mirth bereft,
That just before had laugh'd.

The others turn'd to that Abbot vain,
But " Seize him!" still he cried,
And as the second man turn'd again,
The second man shriek'd and died.

" Seize him, seize him still, I say,"
Cried the Abbot, in furious chafe,
" Or these dogs will grow so bold some day,
E'en monks will not be safe."

A fatal word! for as he sat,
Urging the sword to cut,
An arrow stuck in his paunch so fat,
As in a leathern butt:

As in a leathern butt of wine,
Or piece of beef so round,
Stuck that arrow, strong and fine;
Sharp had it been ground.

I know not what the Abbot, alack!
Thought when that was done;
But there tumbled from the horse's back
A matter of twenty stone.

"Truly," said Robin without fear,
Smiling there as he stood,
"Never was slain so fat a deer
In good old Gamelyn's wood."

"Pardon, pardon, Sir Robin stout,"
Said he that stood apart,
"As soon as I knew thee, I wish'd thee ou
Of the forest with all my heart.

"And I pray thee let me follow thee
Anywhere under the sky,
For thou wilt never stay here with me,
Nor without thee can I."

Robin smiled, and suddenly fell
Into a little thought;
And then into a leafy dell
The three slain men they brought.

Ankle deep in leaves so red,
Which autumn there had cast,
When going to her winter bed
She had undrest her last.

And there in a hollow, side by side,
They buried them under the treen;
The Abbot's belly, for all its pride,
Made not the grave be seen.

Robin Hood, and the forester,
And Nokes the happy Will,
Struck off among the green leaves there
Up a pathless hill;

And Robin caught a sudden sight
Of merry sweet Locksley town,
Reddening in the sunset bright;
And the gentle tears came down.

Robin look'd at the town and land,
And the churchyard where it lay;
And loving Will he kiss'd his hand,
And turn'd his head away.

Then Robin turn'd with a grasp of Will's,
And clapp'd him on the shoulder,
And said, with one of his pleasant smiles,
"Now show us three men bolder."

And so they took their march away,
As firm as if to fiddle,
To journey that night and all next day,
With Robin Hood in the middle.

ROBIN HOOD AN OUTLAW.

Robin Hood is an outlaw bold,
Under the greenwood tree;
Bird, nor stag, nor morning air,
Is more at large than he.

They sent against him twenty men,
Who join'd him laughing-eyed;
They sent against him thirty more,
And they remain'd beside.

All the stoutest of the train
That grew in Gamelyn wood,
Whether they came with these or not,
Are now with Robin Hood.

And not a soul in Locksley town
Would speak him an ill word;
The friars raged; but no man's tongue,
Nor even feature stirred;

Except among a very few,
Who dined in the Abbey halls;
And then with a sigh bold Robin knew
His true friends from his false.

There was Roger the monk, that used to make
All monkery his glee;
And Midge, on whom Robin had never turn'd
His face but tenderly;

With one or two, they say, besides—
Lord! that in this life's dream
Men should abandon one true thing,
That would abide with them.

We cannot bid our strength remain,
Our cheeks continue round;
We cannot say to an aged back,
Stoop not towards the ground:

We cannot bid our dim eyes see
Things as bright as ever,
Nor tell our friends, though friends from youth,
That they'll forsake us never:

But we can say, *I* never will,
False world, be false for thee;
And, oh Sound Truth and Old Regard,
Nothing shall part us three.

HOW ROBIN AND HIS OUTLAWS LIVED IN THE WOODS.

Robin and his merry men
Liv'd just like the birds;
They had almost as many tracks as thoughts,
And whistles and songs as words.

All the morning they were wont
To fly their gray-goose quills
At butts, or trees, or wands and twigs,
Till theirs was the skill of skills.

With swords, too, they played lustily,
And at quarter-staff;
Buffets oft their forfeits were,
Fit to twirl a calf.

Friends who join'd the sport were bound
Those hazards to endure;
But foes were lucky to carry away
What took a year to cure.

The horn was then their dinner-bell;
When, like princes of the wood,
Under the state of summer trees,
Pure venison was their food.

Pure venison and good ale or wine,
Except when luck was chuff;
Or grant 'twas Adam's ale; what then?
Their blood was wine enough.

And story then, and jest, and song,
And Harry's harp went round;
And sometimes they'd get up and dance,
For pleasure at the sound.

Tingle, tangle! said the harp,
As they footed in and out:
Good Lord! was ever seen a dance
At once so light and stout?

A pleasant sight, especially
If Margery was there,
Or little Cis, or laughing Bess,
That tired out six pair.

Or any other merry lass
From the neighbouring villages,
Who came with milk and eggs, or fruit,
A singing through the trees.

Only they say the men were given
Too often to take wives,
And then, 'twixt forest and a shop,
Lead strange half-honest lives.

But all the country round about
Was fond of Robin Hood,
With whom they got a share of more
Than fagots from the wood.

Nor ever would he suffer harm,
To woman, above all;
No plunder, were she ne'er so great,
No fright to great or small;

No,—not a single kiss unliked,
Nor one look-saddening clip;
Accurst be he, said Robin Hood,
Makes pale a woman's lip.

And then, oh then, Maid Marian came
From her proud brother's hall,
With a world of love and tears,
And smiles behind them all.

They built her bowers in forests three,
To flit from one to t'other,
And Robin and she reign'd as pleasant to all,
As faithful to one another.

Only upon the Normans proud,
And on their unjust store,
He'd lay his fines of equity
For his merry men and the poor.

And special was his joy, no doubt,
(Which made the dish to curse,)
To light upon a good fat friar,
And carve him of his purse.

A monk to him was a toad in the hole,
And a priest was a pig in grain,
But a bishop was a baron of beef,
To cut and come again.

Says Robin to the poor who came
To ask of him relief,
You do but get your goods again
That were altered by the thief.

See here now is a plump new coin,
And here's a lawyer's cloak,
And here's the horse the bishop rode,
When suddenly he woke.

Well, ploughman, there's a sheaf of yours
Turn'd to yellow gold:
And, miller, there's your last year's rent,
'Twill wrap thee from the cold.

And you there, Wat of Herefordshire,
Who such a way have come,
Get upon your land-tax, man,
And ride it merrily home.

Narrative Modernizations.

It is becoming less and less necessary to inform new readers of books, that the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer, from two of which the following modernizations are made, are stories supposed to be told by a set of pilgrims, under the guidance of their tavern host, as they are journeying on horseback to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket.

The reader will do me great injustice, if he thinks that modernizations like these are intended as substitutes for what they modernize. Their only plea for indulgence is, that they may act as incitements towards acquaintance with the great original. Chaucer's stories are all complete of their kind, all interesting in their plots, and surprising in their terminations; and the satirical stories are as full of amusement, as the serious are of nobleness and pathos. It is therefore scarcely possible to repeat any one of them, in any way, without producing, in intelligent readers, a desire to know more of him; and so far, and so far only, such ventures as the first of the two following become excusable. I heartily agree with those critics who are of opinion, that no modernizations of Chaucer, however masterly they might be, could do him justice; for either they must be little else but re-spellings (in which case they had better be wholly such at once, like Mr. Clarke's, and profess to be nothing but aids to perusal), or, secondly, they must be something betwixt old style and new, and so reap the advantages of neither (which is the case, I fear, with the one just mentioned); or lastly, like the otherwise admirable versions by Dryden and Pope, they must take leave *in toto* of the old manner of the original, and proceed upon the merits, whatever those may be, of the style of the modernizers; in which case Chaucer is sure to lose, not only in manner, but in matter.

"Conscience," for example, is now a word of two syllables. In Chaucer's time it was a word of three,—*Con-sci-ence*. How is a modern hand to fill up the concluding line in the character of the Nun, without spoiling it?

"And all was con-sci-ence and tender heart."

"*A* tender heart" would not do at all; nor can you find any monosyllable that would.

So, still more emphatically, in the use of the old negative *n'as* (was not) in the exquisite couplet about the officious lawyer—

"No where so busy a man as he there *n'as*,"

(Pronounce *noz*),

"And yet he seemèd busier than he was."

Here the capital rhyme with those two smart peremptory monosyllables (*noz* and *woz*), and consequently the perfection of the couplet,

and part of the very spirit of the wit, must be lost in the necessity for turning the old words into new.

Readers, therefore, will be good enough to take one of the stories here modernized, simply for what I describe it. They are to suppose it told on the railway, only as an imperfect specimen of what they will hear better from the lips of our great acquaintance himself, when they come to know him.

But what am I to say of the other specimen; or rather non-specimen, the fragment of the story of Cambus? Ali I can say is the truth; and so leave it to shift for itself, as it best may. It was the beginning of an attempt, many years ago, to make a complete story for Chaucer's fragment out of my acquaintance with stories of the East. Never, for an instant, did the preposterous idea of emulation enter my head. I could not pretend to complete the fragment in Chaucer's manner; and therefore intended, with many loving apologies, to relate the whole story, as well as I could, in my own. Chaucer's words, however, as the reader may perceive, would still haunt me; Milton's wish to have heard the rest of the story from the old poet, began to haunt me too, and to frighten me; and in spite of many longings to bring my beloved Arabian Nights into play on the subject, I let the project go from me, with the assistance of many cares.

Why then do I here republish it? Because, apart from the perilous shade which it conjures up, I think there is something of "tropical blood" in it, not too common, or undesirable, in English verse-making; and because also there is something in Eastern stories of all kinds, which, being loth to part with it myself, I am apt to suppose equally in favour with the lovers of story-telling in general.

DEATH AND THE RUFFIANS,[37]

MODERNIZED FROM CHAUCER.

Three drunken ruffians, madly believing Death to be an embodied person, go out to kill him. They meet him in the shape of an old man, who tells them where Death is to be found; and they find him accordingly.

In Flanders there was once a desperate set
Of three young spendthrifts, fierce with drink and debt,
Who, haunting every sink of foul repute,
And giddy with the din of harp and lute,
Went dancing and sat gambling day and night,
And swill'd and gorg'd beyond their natures' might,
And thus upon the devil's own altar laid
The bodies and the souls that God had made.

So horribly they swore with every word,
They seem'd to think the Jews had spar'd our Lord,

That rent his body ; and the worse they swore,
And scoff'd, and sinn'd, they did but laugh the more.

Their doors were ever turning on the pin
To let their timbrellers and tumblers in,
Sellers of cakes and such-like ;—every one
A devil's own help to see his business done,
And blow up fires, far better, Sirs, made less,
Out of th' accursed fuel of excess.

These wretches, having lost one night at play,
Were drinking still by the sad dawn of day,
When hearing a bell go for some one dead,
They curs'd, and call'd the vintner's boy, and said,
" Who's he that has been made cold meat to-night?
Ask the fool's name, and see you bring it right?"

The boy who had been sick, and in whose head
Something had put strange and grave matter, said,
" Nay, Sirs, 'twas Hob the smith. You knew him well;
A big-mouth'd, red-hair'd man ; you call'd him Hell.
Last evening he was sitting, bolt upright,
Too drunk to speak, when in there came a wight
Whom men call *Death*, that slayeth high and low;
And with his staff Death fell'd him at a blow,
And so, without one word, betook him hence.
He hath slain heaps during the pestilence.
And, Sirs, they say, the boldest man had best
Beware how he invites so grim a guest,
Or be prepar'd to meet him, night and day.
'Tis what, long since, I've heard my mother say."

" Ay," quoth the vinter, " every word you hear
Is true as gospel. He hath slain this year,
And barely with his presence, half the place.
God grant we meet not with his dreadful face."

" God grant a fig's end," exclaim'd one. " Who's he
Goes blasting thus fool's eyes ? Let's forth, we three,
And hunt him out, and punch the musty breath
Out of his bones, and be the death of Death."

'Twixt rage and liquor staggering forth they flung,
And on their impious oaths their changes rung,
And then would pause, and gathering all the breath
Their shouts had left them, cry out, " Death to Death!"

They had not gone a furlong, when they met,
Beside a bridge that cross'd a rivulet,
A poor old man, who meekly gave them way,
And bow'd, and said, " God save ye, Sirs, I pray."

The foremost swaggerer, prouder for the bow,
Said, " Well, old crawler, what art canting now?
Why art thou thus wrapp'd up, all save thy face?
Why liv'st so long, in such a sorry case?"

The old man began looking steadfastly
Into the speaker's visage, eye to eye,
And said, " Because I cannot find the man,
Nor could, though I had walk'd since time began,
No, not the poorest man, nor the least sage,
Who would exchange his youth for miue old age:
And therefore must I keep mine old age still,
As long as it shall please th' Almighty's will.
Death will not rid me of this aching breast;
And thus I walk, because I cannot rest,
And on the ground, my mother Nature's gate,
I knock with mine old staff, early and late,
And say to her,—Dear mother, let me in.
Lo! how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin.
When shall I sleep for good? Oh, mother dear,
The coffin which has stood this many a year
By my bedside, full gladly would I give
For a bare shroud, so I might cease to live;—
And yet she will not do me, Sirs, that grace;
For which full pale and wrinkled is my face.

" But, Sirs, in you it is no courtesy
To mock an old man, whosoe'er he be,
Much less a harmless man in deed and word.
The Scripture, as in church ye may have heard,

Saith,—' To an old man, hoar upon his head,
Ye shall bow down.' Therefore let this be said
By poor me now—Unto an old man do
Nought which in age ye'd not have done to you.—
And so God guard ye, Sirs, in weal or woe.
I must go onward, where I have to go."

"Nay," t'other cried, " Old Would-be-Dead and Gone,
Thou partest not so lightly, by Saint John.
Thou spak'st but now of that false villain Death,
Who stoppeth here a world of honest breath :
Where doth he bide? Tell us, or by the Lord,
And Judas, and the jump in hempen cord,
As surely as thou art his knave and spy,
We'll hang thee out, for thine old rheums to dry.
Thou art his privy nipper, thou old thief,
Blighting and blasting all in the green leaf."

" Sirs," quoth the old man, " spare, I pray, your breaths :
Death ye would find, and this your road is Death's.
Ye see yon spread of oaks, down by the brook;
There doth he lie, sunn'd in a flowery nook."

Death sunning in a flowery nook! How flies
Each drunkard o'er the sward, to smite him as he lies!

They reach the nook: and what behold they there!
No Death, but yet a sight to make them stare;
To make them stare, not out of mortal dread,
But only for huge bliss and stounded head ;
To wit, pour'd forth, countless and deep and broad,
As if some cart had there discharg'd its load,
A bank of florins of fine gold,—all bright,
Fresh from the mint, plump, ponderous. What a sight!
They laugh'd, they leapt, they flung to earth, and roll'd
Their souls and bodies in the glorious gold;
And then they sat and commun'd; and the worst
Of all the three was he that spoke the first.

"God's life!" quoth he; "here's treasure! here's a day!
Hush;—look about. Now hark to what I say.
This store that luck hath sent us, boys,—ho! ho!
As freely as it came, shall it not go?
By G—, it shall: and precious nights we'll spend.
Who thought friend Death would make so good an end?
This is a wizard's work, to 'scape us, hey?
No matter. 'Tis hard gold, and well shall pay.
But how to store it, Sirs, to get it hous'd?
Help must be shunn'd. Men's marvel would be rous'd.
Wherefore I hold that we draw lots, and he
To whom it falls betake him suddenly
To town, and bring us victuals here, and wine,
Two keeping watch till all the three can dine;
And then at night we'll get us spades, and here,
In its own ground, the gold shall disappear."

The lots are drawn, the youngest thief sets off;
And then the first, after a little cough,
Resum'd—"I say,—we two are of one mind;
Thou know'st it well; and *he* but a mean hind.
'Twas always so. We were the merry men,
And he the churl and sot. Well, mark me then.
This heap of money, ravishing to see,
The fool supposes must be shar'd by three.
But—hey? Just so. You think, as wise men do,
That three men's shares are better shar'd by two."

"Yet how?" said t'other.

"How!" said he:—"'tis done,
As easily as counting two to one.
He sitteth down; thou risest as in jest,
And while thou tumblest with him, breast to breast,
I draw my dirk, and thrust him in the side:
Thine follows mine; and then we two divide
The lovely gold. What say'st thou, dearest friend?
Lord! of our lusty life were seen no end."

The bond was made. The journeyer to the town
Meantime had in his heart roll'd up and down
The beauty of the florins, hard and bright.
"Christ Lord!" thought he, "what if I had the right
To all this treasure, my own self alone!
There's not a living man beneath the throne
Of God that should be half so blest as I."
And thus he ponder'd, till the Enemy,
The Fiend, who found his nature nothing loth,
Whisper'd him, "Poison them. They're villains both.
Always they cheat thee; sometimes beat thee; oft
Carp at thy brains. Prove now whose brains are soft."

With speed a shop he seeketh, where is sold
Poison for vermin; and a tale hath told
Of rats and polecats that molest his fowl.
"Sir," quoth the shopman, "God so guard my soul,
As thou shalt have a drug so pure and strong
To slay the knaves that do thy poultry wrong,
That were the hugest creature on God's earth
To taste it, stricken would be all his mirth
From out his heart, and life from out his sense,
Ere he could drag his body a mile hence."

The cursed wretch, too happy to delay,
Grasping the box of poison, takes his way
To the next street, and buys three flasks of wine.
Two he drugs well against his friends shall dine,
And with a mark secures the harmless one,
To drink at night-time till his work be done;
For all that night he looks to have no sleep,
So well he means to hide his golden heap.
And thus thrice arm'd, and full of murderous glee,
Back to the murderous two returneth he.

What needeth more? for even as their plan
Had shaped his death, right so hath died the man;
And even as the flasks in train were set,
His heirs and scorners fall into his net.

"And seizing the two flasks—"

Death and the Ruffians. P 159.

"Ace thrown," quoth one, smiling a smile full grim;
Now for his wine, and then we'll bury him."

And seizing the two flasks, each held his breath
With eyes to heav'n, and deep he drank his death.

CAMBUS KHAN.[38]

A FRAGMENT.

1823.

A stranger brings to the King of Tartary, while he is feasting, certain wonderful presents, among which is a brazen horse, which the monarch rides.

At Sarra, in the land of Tartary,
There dwelt a king, and with the Russ warr'd he,
Through which there perish'd many a doughty man;
And Cambus was he call'd, the noble Khan.
Nowhere, in all that region, had a crown
Been ever worn with such entire renown.
Hardy he was, and true, and rich, and wise,
Always the same; serene of soul and eyes;
Piteous and just, benign and honourable,
Of his brave heart as any centre stable;
And therewithal he ever kept a state
So fit to uphold a throne so fortunate,
That there was nowhere such another man.

This noble king, this Tartar, Cambus Khan,[39]
Had by the late Queen Elfeta, his wife,
Two sons, named Cambalu and Algarsife,
And a dear daughter, Canace by name,
Whose perfect beauty puts my pen to shame.
If you could see my heart, it were a glass
To show perhaps how fair a thing she was;
But when I speak of her, my tongue appears
To fail me, looking in that face of hers.
'Tis well for me that I regard not those,
Who love what I do, as my natural foes;

Or when I think how dear she is to be
To one that will adorn this history,
And how her heart will love him in return,
My paper, sooner than be touch'd, should burn:
But she knows nothing of all this at present
She's only young, and innocent, and pleasant;
And sometimes by her father sits and sighs,
On which he stoops to kiss her gentle-lidded eyes.

And so befell, that when this Khan supreme
Had twenty winters borne his diadem,
He bade the feast of his nativity
Be cried through Sarra, as 'twas wont to be.
It was in March; and the young lusty year
Came in with such a flood of golden cheer,
That the quick birds, against the sunny sheen,
What for the season and the thickening green,
Sung their affections loudly o'er the fields:
They seem'd to feel that they had got them shields
Against the sword of winter, keen and cold.

High is the feast in Sarra, that they hold;
And Cambus, with his royal vestments on,
Sits at a separate table on a throne;
His sons a little lower on the right;
His daughter on the left, a gentle sight;
And then his peers, apart from either wall,
Ranged in majestic drapery down the hall.
The galleries on two sides have crowded slants
Full as flow'r-shows, of ladies and gallants;
And o'er the doorway, opposite the king,
The proud musicians blow their shawms and sing.

But to relate the whole of the array
Would keep me from my tale a summer's day;
And so I pass the service and the cost,
The often-silenced noise, the lofty toast,
And the glad symphonies that leap'd to thank
The lustre-giving Lord, whene'er he drank.

Suffice to say, that after the third course,
His vassals, while the sprightly wine's in force,
And the proud music mingles over all,
Bring forth their gifts, and set them in the hall;
And so befell, that when the last was set,
And while the king sat thus in his estate,
Hearing his minstrels playing from on high
Before him at his board deliciously,
All on a sudden, ere he was aware,
Through the hall door, and the mute wonder there,
There came a stranger on a steed of brass,
And in his hand he held a looking-glass;
Some sparkling ring he wore; and by his side,
Without a sheath, a cutting sword was tied;
And up he rides unto the royal board:
In all the hall there was not spoke a word:
All wait with busy looks, both young and old,
To hear what wondrous thing they shall be told.

The stranger, who appear'd a noble page,
High-bred, and of some twenty years of age,
Dismounted from his horse: and kneeling down,
Bow'd low before the face that wore the crown;
Then rose, and reverenc'd lady, lords and all,
In order as they sat within the hall,
With such observance, both in speech and air,
That certainly, had Kubla's self been there,[40]
Or sage Confucius, with his courtesy,
Return'd to earth to show what men should be,
He could not have improv'd a single thing:
Then turning lastly to address the king,
Once more, but lightlier than at first, he bow'd,
And in a manly voice thus spoke aloud:—

"May the great Cambus to his slave be kind!
My lord, the king of Araby and Ind,
In honour of your feast, this solemn day,
Salutes you in the manner he best may,
And sends you, by a page whom he holds dear,
(His happy but his humble messenger)

This steed of brass ; which, in a day and night,
Through the dark half, as safely as the light,
O'er sea and land, and with your perfect ease,
Can bear your body wheresoe'er you please.
It matters not if skies be foul or fair ;
The thing is like a thought, and cuts the air
So smoothly, and so well observes the track,
The man that will may sleep upon his back.
All that the rider needs, when he would turn,
Or rise, or take him downwards, you may learn,
If it so please you, when we speak within,
And does but take the writhing of a pin.

" This glass too, which I hold, such is its power
That if by any chance, an evil hour
Befell your empire or yourself, 'twould show
What men you ought to know of, friend or foe ;
And more than this, if any lady's heart
Be set on one that plays her an ill part,
Or is in aught beneath her love and her,
Here she may see his real character,
All his new loves, and all his old pursuits :
His heart shall all be shown her, to the roots.

" Therefore, my lord, with your good leave, this glass,
And this green ring, the greenest ever was,
My master, with his greeting, hopes may be
Your excellent daughter's here, my lady Canace.

" The virtues of the ring, my lord, are these—
That if a lady loves the flowers and trees,
And birds, and all fair Nature's ministers,
And if she bear this gem within her purse,
Or on her hand, like any other ring,
There's not a fowl that goes upon the wing,
But she shall understand his speech or strain,
And in his own tongue answer him again.
All plants that gardens or that fields produce,
She shall be also skilled in, and their use,

Whether for sweetness or for staunching wounds:
No secret shall she miss, that smiles in balmy grounds.

"Lastly, my lord, this sword has such a might,
That let it meet the veriest fiend in fight,
'Twill carve throughout his armour the first stroke,
Were it as thick as any branched oak;
Nor could the wound be better for the care
Of all the hands and skills that ever were;
And yet, should it so please you, of your grace,
To pass the flat side on the wounded place,
Though it were ready to let out his soul,
The flesh should close again, the man be whole.

"Oh heart of hearts! that nobody shall break!
Pardon me, sir, that thus my leave I take
E'en of a sword, and like a lover grieve,
But its own self, unbidden, will not leave
The hand that wields it, though it smote a block
The dullest in the land, or dash'd a rock;
And this my master hopes may also be
Acceptable to Tartary's majesty,
With favour for himself, and pardon, sir, for me."

The Khan, who listen'd with a gracious eye,
Smil'd as he stopp'd, and made a due reply,
Thanking the king, his brother, for the great,
Not gifts, but glories, added to his state,
And saying how it pleas'd him to have known
So young an honour to his neighbour's throne.
The youth then gave the proper officers
The gifts; who, 'midst the music's bursting airs,
Laid them before the king and Canace,
There as they sate, each in their high degree:
But nothing that they did could move the horse;
Boys might as well have tried their little force
Upon a giant with his armour on:
The brazen thing stood still as any stone.
The stranger hasten'd to relieve their doubt,
And touch'd his neck, and led him softly out;

And 'twas a wonder and a joy to see
How well he went, he stept so tenderly.

Great was the press that from all quarters came
To gaze upon this horse of sudden fame;
And many were the struggles to get close,
And touch the mane to try if it hung loose,
Or pat it on the shining flanks, or feel,
The muscles in the neck that sternly swell;
But the Khan's officers forbade, and fear
E'en of the horse conspir'd to keep the circle clear.

High was the creature built, both broad and long,
And with a true proportion to be strong;
And yet so "horsely" and so quick of eye,
As if it were a steed of Araby;
So that from tail to ear there was no part
Nature herself could better, much less art;
Only the people dreaded to perceive
How cold it was, although it seem'd alive;
And on all sides the constant wonder was
How it could move, and yet was plainly brass.

Of magic some discours'd, and some of powers
By planets countenanced in kindly hours,
Through which wise men had compass'd mighty things
Of natural wit to please illustrious kings;
And some fell talking of the iron chain
That fell from heaven in old king Argun's reign;[41]
And then they spoke of visions in the air,
And how this creature might have been born there;
Of white lights heard at work, and fiery fights
Seen in the north on coldest winter nights,
And pale traditions of Pre-Adamites.

Much did the talk run also on the sword,
That harm'd and heal'd, fit gift for sovereign lord.
One said that he had heard, or read somewhere,
Of a great southern king with such a spear;

A chief, who had for mother a sea-fairy,
And slew a terror called the sagittary.[42]
As to the glass, some thought the secret lay
In what geometers and others say
Of angles and reflections, as a pond
Shows not its sides alone, but things beyond;
Iskander set one, like a sleepless eye,
O'er a sea-town, far seen, and studied nigh,
In which the merchant read of storms to come,
Or hail'd his sunny ships blown softly home.[43]
But most the ring was talked of: every one
Quoting that other ring of Solomon,
Which, wheresoe'er it married, brought a dower
Of wisdom, and upon the hand put power.
A knowledge of the speech of birds was known
To be a gift especially its own,
Which made them certain that this ring of green
Was part of it, perhaps a sort of skin
Shed for some reason as a serpent's is;
And here their reasoning was not much amiss.
The wiser sort ponder'd and doubted: folly
Determin'd everything, or swallow'd wholly;
The close and cunning, foolishest of all,
Fear'd that the whole was diabolical,
And wish'd the stranger might not prove a knave
Come to find out what liberal monarchs gave,
And ruin with his very dangerous horses
People's eternal safety, and their purses.
For what it puzzles vice to comprehend,
It gladly construes to the baser end.

Some wits there were began at last to doubt
Whether the horse could really move about,
And on their finger's ends were arguing,
When lo! their subject vanished from the ring;
Vanish'd like lightning; an impatient beast!
But hark! I hear them rising from the feast.

The dinner done, Cambus arose; and all
Stood up, prepar'd to follow from the hall:

On either side they bend beneath his eye:
"Before him goeth the loud minstrelsy;"
And thus they pace into a noble room,
Where dance and song were waiting till they come
With throng of waxen lights that shed a thin perfume.
But first the king and his young visitor
Go where the horse was put, and close the door;
And there the Khan learns all about the pin,
And how the horse is hasten'd or held in,
And turn'd, and made to rise or to descend,
And all by a mere thumb and finger's end,
The stranger further tells him of a word,
By which the horse, the instant it is heard,
Vanishes with his sparkling shape, like light,
And comes again, whether it be day or night.
"And, sir," said he, "my master bade me say
The first time I was honour'd in this way,
(For on the throne you might prefer, he said,
To wave such plain confessions from crown'd head)
That one like you were fitter far than he
To ride the elements like a deity,
And with a speed proportion'd to your will
Shine on the good, and fall upon the ill;
For he, too sensual and too satisfied
With what small good lay near him, like a bride,
Was ever but a common king; but you
A king, and a reforming conqueror, too."[44]

Glad is great Cambus, both at this discourse,
And to be master of so strange a horse,
And longs to mount at once, and go and see
His highest mountain tops in Tartary,
Or look upon the Caspian, or appear
Suddenly in Cathay, a starry fear.
And any other time he would have gone,
So much he long'd to put his pinions on,
But on his birthday 'twas not to be done;
And so they have return'd, and join'd the guests,
Who wait the finish of this feast of feasts.

But how shall I describe the high delight,
And all the joys that danced into the night?
Imagine all that should conclude a feast
Giv'n by a mighty prince, and in the east,
And all was here, from song to supper stand,
As though it had arisen from fairy-land.
The feast before it was a thing of state;
But this the flowery top, and finish delicate.
Here were the cushion'd sofas, the perfumes,
The heavenly mirrors making endless rooms;
The last quintessences of drinks; the trays
Of colour'd relishes dress'd a thousand ways;
The dancing girls, that bending here and there,
With asking beauty lay along the air;
And lighter instruments, guitars and lutes,
Sprinkling their graces on the streaming flutes;
And all the sounds, and all the sweets of show,
Feeling victorious while the harpings go.
Not all the lords were there, only the best
And greatest, all in change of garments drest;
And with them were the wives they thought the loveliest.
You must not judge our Tartars by the tales
Of nations merely eastern, and serails:
The eastern manners were in due degree,
But mix'd and rais'd with northern liberty;
And women came with their impetuous lords,
To pitch the talk and humanize the boards,
And shed a gentle pleasure in the place,—
The smooth alternate with the bearded face;
As airs in spring come soft among the trees,
And what was bluster turn to whispering ease.

Our young ambassador convers'd with all,
But still attendant on the sovereign's call,
Who, like the rest, whatever the discourse,
Was sure to turn it to the gifts and horse;
Till, to the terror of some lovers, word
Was giv'n to fetch the mirror and the sword;
The ring, meanwhile, being handed round, and tried
Upon fair fingers with a fluttering pride.

Some long'd to have the birds awake, and some
Were glad enough the tattling things were dumb.
"Great heaven!" thought one, and seem'd to faint away,
"What (ah! my Khojah!) would the parrot say?"
"And what!" conceived another, "would the jay?
I've often thought the wretch was going to speak,
He trolls the shocking words so in his beak:
I'm sure the very first would make me shriek."
Cambus, as sage as he was valiant, thought
There was no need to have the creatures brought;
Nor, when the mirror came, would he permit
That any but himself should read in it;
For which, as he perceiv'd, but mention'd not,
Full thirty ladies lov'd him on the spot.
As to the sword, he thought it best to try
So masculine a thing in open sky;
Which made him also choose to take a course
Over the towers of Sarra on his horse.
So issuing forth, he led into the air,
Saluting the sweet moon which met him there,
And forth the steed was brought; you would have said,
It knew for what, so easily 'twas led,
And leant with such an air its lively head.
But when at rest, still as before it stood,
As though its legs had to the ground been glued.
Some urged it on, some dragg'd, and some would fain
Have made it lift a foot, but all in vain.
And yet when Cambus whisper'd it, a thrill
Flash'd through its limbs, nor could its feet be still,
But rock'd the body with a sprightly grace,
As though it yearn'd aloft, and waited for the race.

The youth had talk'd of armour like an oak,
And how the sword would joint it with a stroke.
The Khan had no convenient foe at hand,
To see what sort of carving he could stand,
But in the moon there stood some oaken trees,
And suddenly he struck at one of these:
Back, like a giant, fell its tow'ring size,
And let the light on his victorious eyes.

The blow was clearly the sword's own, and yet
The Khan, as if inspir'd, felt proud of it,
And leaping on the horse as suddenly,
He touch'd the pin, and bade the fair good bye,
And 'midst their pretty shrieks, went mounting to the sky.

Cambus ascended such a height so soon,
It seem'd as if he meant to reach the moon;
And you might know by a tremendous shout,
That not a soul in Sarra but look'd out;
But the fierce noise made some of them afraid,
That it might startle e'en a brazen head,
And threat'ning looks were turn'd upon the youth,
Who glow'd and said, "By all the faith and truth
That is, or can be, in the heart of man,
Nothing can happen to the noble Khan:
See, he returns!" And at the word, indeed,
They saw returning the descending steed;
Not round and round careering, but at once;
Oblique and to the point, a fervid pounce.
For to say truth, the noble Khan himself,
Though he had fought on many a mountain shelf,
And droop'd through deserts, and been drench'd in seas,
Felt somewhat strange in that great emptiness,
And was not sorry to relieve his court,
By cutting his return some fathom short:
Such awful looks has utter novelty
To dash and to confuse the boldest eye.

The Khan return'd, they hasten all again
To their warm room, but do not long remain:
For late, and long, and highly-wrought delight
Cannot, at will, resume its giddy height;
And so, his story told, and praises spread
From mouth to mouth, he wav'd his court to bed;
Yet still in bed, and dozing oft between,
Their fading words recall'd what they had seen:
Still of the ring they mumbled, and the glass,
And what amazing things might come to pass:

And when they slept (for suppers produce dreams,
And join'd with dinners, mount them to extremes)
A hundred vapour-headed souls that night
Went riding their own brass with all their might:
They skim, they dive, they shoot about, they soar,
They say,—"Why rode I not this way before?
Strange! not to think of such a perfect goer!
What leg that crosses brass would stoop to horseflesh more?"[45]

Ay: such quoth the wise wit, is human life:
We dream of mirth, and wake, and find one's wife!
Nay, quoth the wiser wit, the best way then
Is to wake little, and to sleep again.
Wake much, if life go right: if it go wrong,
Learn how to dream with Chaucer all day long:
Or learn still better, if you can, to make
Your world at all times, sleeping or awake;
The true receipt, whether by days or nights,
To charm your griefs, and double your delights.

Fancy and Fact differ in this alone;
One strikes our spirit, and our substance one;
But both alike can bring into our eyes
The tears, and make a thousand feelings rise
Of smarting wrongs or pleasant sympathies.

But sleep thou too, my pen. At morn we'll tell
What sweet and sad new knowledge there befell
The lady of the ring within a warbling dell.

Narrative Imitations.

THE TAPISER'S TALE.

ATTEMPTED IN THE MANNER OF CHAUCER.

Among the Canterbury Pilgrims, of whom Chaucer, for the most part, has given such particular as well as admirable descriptions, mention is made of five, who appear only in their corporate capacity, as members of one and the same guild; to wit, a Haberdasher, a Carpenter, a Webbé (webber or weaver), a Dyer (dyer), and a Tapiser—that is to say, a maker of tapestry. The same term designated an upholsterer: so common was it in the days of the poet to cover with tapestry the walls of apartments.

These persons, who are all represented as substantial citizens of no little importance, are said by the poet to have contributed their tales on the road to Canterbury, like the rest of the pilgrims; but none of the tales appear, Chaucer's great work having been either left unfinished, or unfortunate enough to have lost thus much of its copy.

From this deficiency in its requisite quantity of matter, occasion has here been taken to suppose that the Carpenter has just been telling a tale, which his hearers have found tedious, pretentious, and wanting in good fellowship; and that the Host of the Tabard Inn, who is the guide of the pilgrimage, and the constituted arbiter in such matters, feels himself warranted in rebuking the narrator, and in calling upon another person, after his wonted jovial fashion, for a tale of a different sort.

The groundwork of the story made its first English appearance in the pages of the once-vilified but now deservedly-respected old traveller, Sir John Mandeville; and the reader may find it repeated, *verbatim*, in the second volume, page fifty-four, of Mr. MacFarlane's excellent little work, the *Romance of Travel;* the only fault of which, by the way, though it has contrived to be copious too, is that it is too short.[46] Mr. MacFarlane, after praising the legend itself, as well as its narrator, adds, that "Hafez, whose song was all of the rose and nightingale, might have sung it in Persian verse; and Dan Chaucer, our traveller's contemporary, have introduced it into his *Canterbury Tales*, or have made another *Romaunt of the Rose* about it."

Hence the present attempt;—with how much reverence for Chaucer, whether endeavouring to imitate his graver or his lighter manner, and how heartily prepared to admit objections from Chaucerophilists more devoted (if such there be), need not, it is hoped, be said. Reverence and want of reverence may equally attempt to give an idea of the manner of a master; but the one will do it with all submission, as a filial study; the other with feelings fit only to be disclaimed.

THE PROLOGUE.

THE Carpenter, whan that his tale was done,
Which sette us nigh on sleepyng everych one,
Al be it sorely smote us pilgryms gay,
Who gat us too moche comfort by the way,
Lookéd as big and highe, as thof his lore
Gaf him Saint Joseph for his auncestor.
Him seemèd, thof his eyne were somedele wry,
Which in wise head breedeth humilitee,
As he had been yborn and designate,
By that same mark, to setten all things straight;
And because termés of one craft he knew,
Which, save of carpenters, are known of few,
That he ne wanted nought to bringe to schoole
All craftés else, and rap hem with his rule.

Oure Host, good Harry Bailey, colde not bide
The mannés folie; and right loude he cryed,
"By corpus, and by bell, and holy Luke,
Ful bitter and right foule is the rebuke
Thy tale hath given, Maister Carpentere,
To all the good and worthie sinners here.
God pardon me for saying worthie and good
Of anie sort of men or multitude,
For gentle and simple we are sinners all,
Albeit some be grete and some be smalle,
And sinnes of carpenteres none may espie,
Save by some helpe of gymlet for the eie.
But that which made thy bitternesse so strong,
Sir Joyner, was, it was so veray long;
For sette ye case, there colde be made of physick
A draughte as long, who wolde not beare his tizzic,
Blotches, or blaines, and rot in veray bonés,
Sooner than draine swiche potion all at onés?
Thou shouldst have thought, how often thou hast wishéd
The sermon done while that thy meate was dishéd;
For at swiche times men care but for their shinnes
Of beef or pork, and nothing for their sinnes."

And thereupon whiles laughen all yfere,
Oure Host he turned him to the Tapisere,
And said, " Sir Tapisere, as ay tis mete
That long and bitter end in short and swete,
In Goddés name telleth us sodenlie
Some littel mirthe or lovely tragedie,
Some veray lumpe of sugar of a tale,
Or ellés certés we all fainte and fayle,
And may not ride but sick into the town.
Grete choyce of tales hast thou, as is reasoun,
Seeing what store thy needle hath ytold
In wol and flax; yea, and in cloth of gold;
What griesly gestés[47] and sweete histories
Of Judiths, and of Jaels, and Sir Guys,
Of Arthurs, Esthers, Troy and Seneca,
Saint Thesens, and the grete Duke Joshua,
With hundreds moe than I may telle or think,
John Prester, and the lovely Tree of Drink;
And what, I note, so pleaseth clerkly pen,
Susanna and the twey false aldermen.[48]
Therefore, say on. Only, in anie sort,
Deare and belovéd Tapisere, be short."

The Tapisere, who was a worthy man,
Said, " I wol do my beste," and so began.

THE TALE.

Within a mile or twey of Bethlem toun,
As holy bookés maketh mencion,
Lyeth a feeld men clepe Feeld Floridus;
For al so sicker as in May with us
The feeldés ben daysies and cuppés alle,
Which n'are but brighté weedés, chepe and smalle,
This feeld, though it lye lone as anie plaine,
And tended is of nought save sunne and raine,
Bloometh with roses all, both redde and whyte,
That everych yere men runnen to the sighte;
Ne marvel is it, though a wondrous thing,
For it is Goddés owné gardening;

For these were the first roses ever made;
And why they were, sirs, now shall it be sayd.

In oldé dayés of King Gomerus,
Which was the first king after Noachus,
There bode in Bethlem a poore orphan mayd,
Gladsome by kind, by change of fortune staid,
Who wrongfully, by gealous frenesie,
Was brought to judgment for unchastitie,
And maugre all her true, beseechynge breth,
Was dampned to the dredful fiery deth,
The likest helle on erthe, even the stake.

Oh puré blood, swiche feendlich thirst to slake!
Alas for the soft flesche and gentil herte!
Alas, why colde she not fro life asterte
Softlie and sodenlie, with no moe care!
Alas, that strongé men, which wol not beare
The prycking of a thorne, but they must curse,
And rage, and ban, and shew themselven worse
Than manie a Pagan, yet, sirs, can desire
To put a poore young creature to the fire!
I n'ot how they colde beare the nights and dayes,
That wasted her with frights and with amaze
For constant thinking of that passe of helle.
Beare it I may not, I, nor you it telle;
And so I hasten th' executionn.

Come is the daye, and crowded by the toun
Is Felon's Feeld, all save the stakés place,
And there full soone is seen the simple face,
All redde at first, then whyte, and nothing stern,
That fro the spinning-wheele was tane to burn.

And "Oh, grete God!" thus dumbly prayeth she,
"That willest me to beare this miserie
For some just cause, though it I may not finde
In the remembraunce of my feeble minde,
I praye thee adde it not to mine offence
If speedilie I wolde be burnéd hence,
And ask the grace thereto at mannés hand."

And, with the wordes, a littel from her stand
She yearnéd to the man that readie stood
To put the lighted torche unto the wood,
And said, " Hast thou a wife, or female child ?"
And he said, " Both." And she in a sort smiled
For comfort of the kindred of the man,
And said, " For their sakes I beseeche thee than,
That thou wilt put the wood a litel higher
About me, that the sooner by the fire
I may be reachéd in the throat and breth,
And so be ended." And the man of deth,
The whiles he graunted her the dredfull grace,
For veray pity turnd away his face,
And swiftly as he colde the fagots lit.
But manie in the croud colde bearen it
No moe, mothers and wives in speciall,
But gat them holpen back unto the wall:
They felt the unborn babe stir at their hertes;
So piteous swete, and void of ill desertes,
She lookéd, somedele shrinking at the flame;
Then hid her face, not to behold the same,
And bow'd her hed, and shope her for to die.

But what is this, that maketh heavenlie
The aire, with smell of flowrés strange and new,
As if from veray Paradise it blew,
Or Heaven has opend, flowr-like, on the place ?
And lo ! the stake; and lo ! the blissful face;
All blissful is the face, but now so lorne,
For, of the fagots, all just lit beforne
Are turnd to trees of roses, redde and brighte,
And all, not lit, are turnd to roses whyte !
Her foes are gone, feeble with dredfull feare;
And all the croud, whiles such as standen neare
Drawe back to make moe wyde the holy ring,
Fall downe to kneelynge and to worshippynge:
And there she standeth, shining all abrede,
Like to an angell, paradysd in dede.

THE SHEWE OF FAIRE SEEMING;

ATTEMPTED IN THE MANNER OF SPENSER.

Bearing in mind what was said in the preface to the preceding *Attempt in the Manner of Chaucer*, respecting the difference between reverent and irreverent endeavours of the kind, the reader will be good enough to give the author credit for the like propriety of feeling in the present instance.

In an effusion which, compared with a poem so long as the *Faerie Queene*, is a brevity of the briefest description, several reasons have hindered him from attempting to imitate that diffuser, and at the same time more inverted portion of the manner of Spenser, in which the poet was wont to indulge himself, when expatiating at large over his unbounded domains. The author, in directing his effort more particularly to what is considered the chief characteristic of Spenser,—his allegory,—availed himself of the closer style observable in the master on occasions which tended to confine him, like a portrait-painter, to the objects immediately before him.

The invention, such as it is, is the writer's own; which was the case also with the particulars in the Imitation of Chaucer, excepting the simple facts of the condemnation to the stake, the metamorphosis of the fagots into roses, and the name of *Floridus* which the roses gave to the place of execution. He mentions this, because some of his readers appear to have thought otherwise.

The imitation of Spenser, like that of his predecessor, being assumed to be the production of the poet himself, is supposed to have been written soon after he was introduced to the family of the Sidneys. It contained a few more stanzas, the purpose of which was to show how Wisdom, strictly so called, and thoroughly understood, contained of necessity all the really prudential qualities exclusively attributed to what is called Worldly Wisdom, in order to give the latter a false character, and elevate what is base in it. For no kind of real wisdom can be either antagonistic or supplementary to wisdom itself; and it is out of an instinctive sense to this effect, that the epithet "worldly" always implies something of a corruption of wisdom, and therefore something not truly and finally wise. But the author has touched upon this point in stanza 37; and he feared to be too long, as well as to pay too little compliment to the discernment of his readers.

ARGUMENT.

Wisdom, *upon his wondrous stage,*
Doth shewe his scenes to youth;
Which Worldly Wisdom, *fault-finding*
Stirreth to further truth.

I.

A faire old house, less statelie than serene,
Nigh to a towne, yet deepe within a glade,
And looking on a lawne of gladsome greene,
Whence crept a path to manie a thoughtful shade,
WISDOM whilere[49] his gentle dwelling made.
A little brooke, neare beehives not a few,
Glimmer'd in front; beside whose streame there play'd
Children, the which it pleas'd him much to view;
And bright, the streame beyond, a beauteous garden grew.

II.

There ofte, at breake of day, be seene he might,
Drawing sweet balsams from the bitterest flowers;
Or, at his doore, by the starres' booke at night,
Reading of endlesse, angell-wingèd houres;
For he held converse with celestiall powers,
From which he sole true name of wizard bore;
And among other giftes and goodly dowers,
Sights could he shewe, most faire, to aide his lore,
And also sights most uglie, for to urge it more.

III.

What, weigh'd with him, were wizards every one,
So call'd, but fooles, tricking and trick'd withal?
As Merlin, he that was a devil's son,
Yet in a trap set by his dame did fall;
Or that same slaine Maugis, faulse cardinall;[50]
Or Faustus, selling to the sire of lies
His worthlesse selfe, whence neither gain'd at all.
Wizard is *wiseard;* and the onlie wise
Is he, whose setting sun is heavenlie as its rise.

IV.

And who such lore could teache as Wisdom's selfe?
Therefore did Heaven itselfe, from all he sawe,
And all he found in knowledge on his shelfe,
Give him unearthlie power sights forth to drawe
Of spirituall thinges, bound to obey no lawe

Of like compulsion, or be seene of eyes,
Save theirs whom he would grace, or would adawe,[51]
With beauteous cherishment, or dread surprise:
And ever they came soft, and swiftlie, servant-wise.

V.

His house's largest roome, as was his wont,
Making kinde schoole for youthes of budding age,
He, with these sights and shewes therein, would daunt
Their hastie wills, and reverent thoughts engage,
Setting all forth upon a very stage:
For much the stage he lov'd, and wise theàtre,[52]
Counting it as a church, in which the page
Of vertuous verse found the sole dispensator,
That could, with doubling force, make auditor spectator.

VI.

At lessons thus high taught in sagest schoole,
Smiling approofe as each before him rose,
A would-be sib,[53] who secretly its rule
Deem'd fond, and for small tricks took those great shewes,
(His name was WORLDLY WISDOM) one day chose
To sit; and though as in approofe he sat,
'Twas in such sort as one that inly knowes
More than he heares; and though commending that,
Hath something still in store, to raise a caveat.

VII.

The chosen youthes, who that day sat athirst
For new shewes promis'd them on Wisdom's stage,
Were such as nighed unto the time, when first
They left, to seeke the worlde, his safer page,
And felt their bloods warming to kindlie rage
For all that manlie was, and good, and faire.
Alas! too truly fitted to assuage
That thirst the shewes were found, for sad they were;
The more for seeming glad, when first they came from aire.

VIII.

From aire they came, soft sliding, without pace,
And unto musick fitting each in tone;
And as they, one by one, stood fix'd in place,
Voices of friends invisible made known
Their names with zeale, in which much love was shewn,
With great avisement [54] of their vertues rare.
The names were faulse, and not the names alone,
Ne faulser than their fronts and faces were;
And foule was all their substance, as their seeming faire,

IX.

The first was Honesty, a chapman plaine,
With manlie cheare, half smiling and half stayed,
To shewe that he one measure for his gaine
And one for equall dealing kept in trade.
His clothing stout had all for use been made;
Which to keepe cleane, and make it last the more,
O'er all his front an apron he had laid;
And in his heavie hand from Chepe he bore
A cornucopia long, whose mouth shewed piled up store.

X.

Awhile he stood, as making gentle suit
For custom, which the youthfull gazers all
Had fain accorded, so faire look'd his fruit,
So closely pack'd, and mark'd at price so small,
And he himself fellow so good withal:
And scarce could they forbeare to cry aloud,
And call him to them as from publicke stall;
Till recollecting he was shewe avowed
Of magic crafte, they whist,[55] and still'd their joyous crowd.

XI.

With loutings then, and visage still in view,
Like to a player's congee[56] on the stage,
He backward stepp'd, as one his path that knew,
And so would finish: but the wizard sage
Sternly him stopp'd, like a right archimage,

And bade him in his going turne about:
On which the man, with looks at first of rage,
Then of remonstrance, then refusal stout,
Then fear and abject reverence, turn'd him to go out.

XII.

But what a change was then! and how the back
Belied the front of that same chapman plaine!
For it was all one rotten pedlar's pack,
On which there swarm'd in heapes grubs close as grain;
And like a Janus he had faces twain,
Of which the hindmost was a beetle's face
Made bigger, such as rolleth dirt with pain;
Whiles up to that same cornucopia's grace
Of shewe in front, there ran one vile long hollow place.

XIII.

Then voices very different from those first
That prais'd the man, and gave him noble name,
Cried out "DISHONESTY!" and him accurst
As one that pill'd[57] the poore, and did great shame
Unto true HONESTY, and wrongfull blame;
And all those youthes, the which had put their trust
In his full horne, and long'd to buy the same
Not more for feast, than joy in one so just,
Felt scorne and shame, and bann'd[58] his loathly trunk and bust.

XIV.

He went; and in his place presented was
One, in those youthes that seem'd to take great pride,
And by those first fond tongues, as with true cause,
By name of JUST LAUDATION was outcried
With lusty loudness, that dissent defied.
A doctor's gowne he wore, his right that showed
To judge in schooles, and speake of scholars tried;
And ever as he came, his visage glowed
With greeting so entranced, as worldes of praise bestowed.

XV.

Not olde he was, ne was his gowne in sooth
Much overnewe, but somewhat bare of thread;
Which yet he wore, as one that cared for truth
Much more than treasure, ne would fain be fed
With feast, provided he got noble bread
Out of the sweat of a free-judging brow,
Which look'd unto deedes done, not sayings sed;
And then he spoke, and owned he knew not how
To call halfe-knowledge whole, ne unto halfe-worth bow.

XVI.

"Therefore," he sed, "he prais'd their teacher sage,
And eke the sires that sought a guide so rare
To save the leaders of th' ensuing age
From erring into byewayes seeming faire,
Which were but swamp, and sandiland, and snare;
Ne should the height of some of those great sires,
Much less their wealth, or here and there an heir
Worthy their worth, stay laud that truth requires:
Wealth were a curse indeed, that marr'd such just desires."

XVII.

The youthes, and those same heirs in speciall,
Albeit they but late a sight had seene,
Which warn'd them how they fell againe in thrall
Of a first view of what might double been,
Fell not in thrall alone, but transport clean
With all which JUST LAUDATION had them told.
They roar'd; they ramp'd, they glorified I ween,
Their foolish selves thrice over in their bold
Praise of his praise, untill they shamed their teacher old.

XVIII.

Who now in ire (if sage in ire could be)
Cried to that maddener of his boyish rout,
"Begone, base trier of my masterie,
And in thy going turne thy lie about,
And shewe them what, for every senseless shout

Will make them wish they had been shorn of ears."
The liar turn'd; and they, withouten doubt,
Wish'd themselves neither hearers then, ne seers,
Ne dared a glance aside at their like blushing peers.

XIX.

For lo! this shape, like to the former shape,
Was double-visaged; and the face in view
Was all a masse of mockery and jape,[59]
With tongue out-lolling, winking eyes askew,
And filthy slaver, of toad-eating hue;
And all the while, as it would ever dine,
And hugg'd itself on thoughts of dishes new,
It patted, betwixt grunt and fondling whine,
Stomach, which still to feast it sought occasion fine.

XX.

And "PARASITE!" exclaim'd those tongues of truth,
The wiles the falshood took his twofold way.
Ne hiss, ne breath, was heard from all those youth,
Such load of shame upon their spirits lay,
And sense of future biting of that day:
Till taking pity in his secret thought
On that so plaine remorse which did them fray,
The gentle wizard straight before them brought
The third of those strange shapes which so their looking sought.

XXI.

Which so their looking sought, but this the most,
And most obtain'd, and sweetest seem'd to eyes,
Ne one feare brought of what those two had cost
To their misjudging haste with dread surprise,
Which bade them henceforth trust no outward guise:
For this a damsel was, and seem'd a may,[60]
So made of all that maketh ecstasies,
That when her unseen ushers LOVE did say,
Her look at once bore memory, sense, and soul away.

XXII.

A loose light vest of blue she wore, with hood
O'er half her locks; and with a lavish glee
She shook from out its sleeves, as in a flood,
Heaps of red roses, which the lovely she
Then danced among with joyous impulse free:
And then she stood, and as in some sweet want
Of friend to finish her felicity,
Warbled a song, learnt where the Sirens haunt,
Of "Hither, love, oh hither! Let no feare thee daunt."

XXIII.

Up sprang the youthes, and would have rent the roofe
With raptures fiercer far than all before,
Had not the sire, with swifter shrill reproofe,
Cried out, and turn'd the halfe-born stifled roar
Into a sound far liker that of yore,
When its last groan the brazen bull out-gave
For what its human, burning bowels bore;[61]
For now was seen a sight, that nearly drave
Youth's life-delighted selfe to wish itselfe in grave.

XXIV.

The Love was turn'd; its hood, and more, gone clean,
Shewing that second face, which in those two
Vile shapes before had so detested been;
But more detested far was now the view;
For whereas those, being mockeries, almost knew
Some touch of comic, this was tragic all,
Nay, sadder still for want of sadness due,
Being stone-hard, like face cut forth in wall,
And more indifferent-eyed than mute at funerall.

XXV.

Nathless both sad and sick, though hard 'twas,
Als[62] anger'd, though corpse-cold, and seeming dead.
Pale snakes, entwined with strings of coin, alas!
Writhed foul, though little felt, about its head;
And for the ghastlier anti-life, instead

Of back, and substance, and where heart should be,
The trunk, like to a tray disfurnishéd,
Was front alone, and hollow now to see,
Like trunk of dread Elle-Maiden, haunting Germany.[63]

XXVI.

" Detestable, and miserable, and faulse !"
The Master cried,—" Go,—into nothing go."
And like to shadowes fading upon walles,
But with a gesture faint of mop and mow
At what might have seem'd comfort worded so,
The shape sank backward, gaping death-bed-wise.
The youthes dumb-stricken sate, slain of that showe
In pride and courage, ne scarce lifted eyes,
Ne breath'd, save when as thought took sad reliefe in sighs.

XXVII.

What first was LOVE, was now call'd Loathednesse,
Though unto some it was known of neither name;
And some confused it with a Piteousnesse
By heartlesse men brought into heart-felt shame,
And forced to beare its owne and others' blame:
But these be riddles needing not recall
Into such thoughts as here avisement claim:
In good sad time youth will be taught them all;
May WISDOM give them then his knowledge integrall.

XXVIII.

As right reproofes least look'd for, latest given,
And follow'd by no theme of alien force,
Best take and best keepe root in conscience riven,
And in and in still bite with sweet remorse,
WISDOM would fain have left his shewes that course,
But that his namesake, WORLDLY WISDOM hight,
With voice once softe and sleke, now vinous hoarse,
Broke forth, whenas was finish'd that third sight,
In wordes heavy at heart, though seeming gay and light.

XXIX.

" Behold !" he cried : " see, see ! here see, good youths,
In these plaine shewes, the good of great plaine speaking :
Here WISDOM hath indeed told wisdom-truths,
Here whineth not in wordes pining and peaking,
Well wotting such be gullery all, and gleeking.[64]
Lo, Honesty ! what is it ? false pretences :
Lo, Praise of others ! what is that ? self-seeking :
Lo, Love desired ! what but the honest senses ?
When done with, what but emptinesse and worse offences ?

XXX.

" Certes of arts a master great is here :
High proofes he bringeth of his wondrous skill,
And his quick servants causeth to appeare
Quaint monitors 'gainst honeysops that still
Must tice poore youth, and turne to bitter pill.
Nathless, methinks, in these his goodly meanes
To bless his youthes, and mould them to his will,
And make them saints and angells in their teens,
Something is miss'd, 'twixt true and false that intervenes.

XXXI.

" Truth, as men say, is gold ; and true it is ;
And gold, as eke 'tis said, needeth alloy
For a great sake ; to wit, expediency's ;
Else 'tis so hard, it worketh much annoy,
And hindereth commerce all, and social joy.
Therefore a wisdom beyond WISDOM's self,
To wit, beyond his letter, simple and coy,
Ordainèd hath, despite of ghost and elf,
His book at such nice times should be laid up on shelf.

XXXII.

" For, maugre these his makings of dread faces,
Faces we all must make, in sense and reason ;
To say not so, were to beat all gimaces :
For who one face to loyalty and treason,
To court and mob, or in and out of season,

Like to a very vice could keepe in screw,
And not make true men yearn to twist his weason?
No cheat am I; yet I, not only two,
But twenty faces have, and none unfit to view."

XXXIII.

Ah, luckless wordes! and luckless wight! for lo!
By some new cunning of great Wisdom's art
Poor WORLDLY WISDOM by some sudden blow
Was sent about, and with the hinder part
Of his owne head made all the gazers stârt:
They shudder'd! then laugh'd out; and evermore
Laugh'd and laugh'd on, each from his very heart,
Untill their breaths grew scant, and sides grew sore,
And all the room seem'd rolling in the huge uproar.

XXXIV.

For the poore wretch was nothing but a dish
With a mouth over it, and two blind eyes;
In sensual living had been all his wish,
And this was all was left him of his prize.
He saw not heart, ne hope, ne fields, ne skies,
Ne lov'd or tasted aught, except his dinner,
And that with tooth grown dull. He held it lies
To say that old age ever was a winner
Of any least thing else. God pity him a sinner!

XXXV.

In that last thought, through WISDOM's gentle moving,
Fell, and so died, the stormy merriment,
The whiles, as if at their late scorn's reproving,
The small mean vision wither'd up and went,
Like one to nothingness by nature bent,
Soon as the laugh was not upon his side.
"Well worth your scorn and scoff was his intent
To make believe, my children," Wisdom cried,
"That because faulse is faulse, all truth is nullified.

XXXVI.

" All those faire fronts ye sawe were masks alone
Whate'er they seem'd, or still may daily seeme
'Twixt man and man in fleshly vision shewne;
For wheresoe'er cometh deceit extreme,
Cometh of what it looks nought but the dreame,
And only the Soul's Face, which ay is hid
Save by the single-minded, dares forth beame
In one sole front. Those which to turn I bid,
Were all Soul's Faces, forc'd to shewe them as they did.

XXXVII.

" Thus I but warn'd of falsehood; bid ye guard
'Gainst foolish deeming all that glistens gold;
But not the lesse its fierie trial hard
The true ore stands, when melts the baser mould.
No: nor the lesse, as the sage did of old,[65]
May true men buy and sell, and sager shine
For knowing gain's good uses manifold.
Praiser of youth was Socrates divine;
But blaming too when wrong, gave praise its value fine.

XXXVIII.

" And Love?—What wise man knoweth not how true
And single-faced loveliest true love can be?
How sure to meete the face it answereth to,
In mirth with smiles, smiling how totally!
In griefe with teares, soothing how helpfully!
For surest of sure thinges is helpe in love.
But now your eyes shall learne, and grieve not.—See!
Beholde, for sample, one faire household dove,
One of our England's angells, not yet call'd above."

XXXIX.

While thus he spoke, lo! Wisdom's stage became
A plot of grass within a bowery nook,
In which, as though she round her felt the same,
There walk'd a youthfull ladie with a book,
Loving now that, now bird, now bud, now brook,

The more for what in the sweete page she red,
As you might guesse by her referring look.
" 'Tis Sidney's sister," Wisdom softly sed :—
" With brother's love begins the love that well shall spred.

XL.

" With brother's love, and love of parents good,
And love of all that with celestiall aire
Fills home, begins the love that is endued
With gifts to make another's home as faire.
There seek ye your Sirens ; finde your first loves there,
And earne them soone, and love them first and last.
There only, or with grief-taught sweetnesse rare,
Shapes will ye finde, in whose one mould are cast
Fair Seeming and True Being, bound in substance fast.

XLI.

" See, in her bower waiteth a spinning-wheele,
And, 'tis a herbal nigheth the guitar.
She studieth to clothe the poor, and heale,
And blithely then singeth, as though her star
Shone on a worlde of peace without a jar ;
Grave looks in her are sweete as gay in others,
And gay in her true as their gravest are :
Hence flowereth she, pride of the flower of brothers,
Hence will be pride and flower of dearest wives and mothers." [66]

XLII.

Here the sweete ladie, turning as he spoke,
Her gentle steps in walking to retrace,
Oh ! what a transport in the youthes awoke,
Simply at witnessing no second face !
They waited not to note the shape and grace ;
They lov'd the very falling of her haire ;
Nay, deem'd its ribbon of celestiall race.
Her coming had been all that was most faire ;
Her going beat all comings, angells' though they were.

XLIII.

No shout ensued; no noise; nought save a murmur
Of their entrancèd souls, each unto each;
None needed more their faith in love made firmer;
Here fairest faire was found without impeach;
Here an earth-heaven, which if they might not reach
(So high a star in place was Sidney's sister),
Nathless of heaven the like they might beseech:
Therefore, in thought, each with deare worship kiss'd her,
When, as in cruell dreame, lo! suddenlie they miss'd her.

XLIV.

Miss'd her; for now as suddenlie there rose
The deepe church-organ's gently-gathering might,
With which the sage was duly wont to close
Teachings, harmonious with good and right.
Rose then his schoole, and parted for the night
Each to his thoughts, sweete as those notes, and strong;
And as they went, the great heaven-opening sight
Of th' order-keeping stars, never yet wrong,
Shewed to what great sweete ends all firme good thoughts belong.

Political and Critical Poems.

POLITICS AND POETICS.

OR,

THE DESPERATE SITUATION OF A JOURNALIST UNHAPPILY SMITTEN WITH THE LOVE OF RHYME.

(WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1810.)

AGAIN I stop;—again the toil refuse!
Away, for pity's sake, distracting Muse,
Nor thus come smiling with thy bridal tricks
Between my studious face and politics.
Is it for thee to mock the frowns of fate?
Look round, look round, and mark my desperate state.
Cannot thy gifted eyes a sight behold,
That might have quell'd the Lesbian bard of old,
And made the blood of Dante's self run cold?

Lo, first the table spread with fearful books,
In which, whoe'er can help it, never looks;
Letters to Lords, Remarks, Reflections, Hints,
Lives snatch'd a moment from the public prints;
Pamphlets to prove, on pain of our undoing,
That rags are wealth, and reformation ruin,
Journals, and briefs, and bills, and laws of libel,
And, bloated and blood-red, the placeman's annual bible.[67]

Scarce from the load, as from a heap of dead,
My poor old Homer shows his living head;
Milton, in sullen darkness, yields to fate,
And Tasso groans beneath the courtly weight;
Horace alone (the rogue!) his doom has miss'd,
And lies at ease upon the Pension List.

Round these, in tall imaginary chairs,
Imps ever grinning, sit my daily Cares;
Distaste, delays, dislikings to begin,
Gnawings of pen, and kneadings of the chin.
Here the Blue Dæmon keeps his constant stir,
Who makes a man his own barometer;
There Nightmare, horrid mass! unfeatured heap!
Prepares to seize me if I fall asleep;
And there, with hands that grasp one's very soul,
Frowns Headache, scalper of the studious poll;
Headache, who lurks at noon about the courts,
And whets his tomahawk on East's Reports.

Chief of this social game, behind me stands,
Pale, peevish, periwigg'd, with itching hands,
A goblin, double-tail'd, and cloak'd in black,
Who, while I'm gravely thinking, bites my back.[68]
Around his head flits many a harpy shape,
With jaws of parchment, and long hairs of tape,
Threatening to pounce, and turn whate'er I write,
With their own venom, into foul despite.
Let me but name the court, they swear and curse
And din me with hard names; and what is worse
'Tis now three times that I have miss'd my purse.[69]

No wonder poor Torquato[70] went distracted,
On whose gall'd senses just such pranks were acted;
When the small tyrant, God knows on what ground,
With dungeons and with doctors hemm'd him round.[71]

Last, but not least, (methinks I see him now!)
With stare expectant, and a ragged brow,
Comes the foul fiend, who—let it rain or shine,
Let it be clear or cloudy, foul or fine,
Or freezing, thawing, drizzling, hailing, snowing,
Or mild, or warm, or hot, or bleak and blowing,
Or damp, or dry, or dull, or sharp, or sloppy,
Is sure to come,—the Devil, who comes for copy,

* * * * *

Yet see! e'en now thy wondrous charm prevails;
The shapes are moved, the stricken circle fails;
With backward grins of malice they retire,
Scared at thy seraph looks and smiles of fire.
That instant, as the hindmost shuts the door,
The bursting sunshine smites the window'd floor;
Bursts too on every side the sparkling sound
Of birds abroad; th' elastic spirits bound;
And the fresh mirth of morning breathes around.
Away, ye clouds; dull politics, give place;
Off cares, and wants, and threats, and all the race
Of foes to freedom and to graceful leisure!—
To-day is for the Muse, and dancing pleasure.

Oh for a seat in some poetic nook,
Just hid with trees, and sparkling with a brook,
Where through the quivering boughs the sunbeams shoot
Their arrowy diamonds upon flower and fruit,
While stealing airs come whispering o'er the stream,
And lull the fancy to a waking dream!
There shouldst thou come, O first of my desires,
What time the noon had spent its fiercer fires,
And all the bow'r, with checker'd shadows strewn,
Glow'd with a mellow twilight of its own.
There shouldst thou come, and there sometimes with thee
Might deign repair the staid Philosophy,
To taste thy fresh'ning brook, and trim thy groves,
And tell us what good task true glory loves.

I see it now!—I pierce the fairy glade,
And feel th' enclosing influence of the shade.
A thousand forms, that sport on summer eves,
Glance through the light, and whisper in the leaves,
While every bough seems nodding with a sprite,
And every air seems hushing the delight,
And the calm bliss, fix'd on itself awhile,
Dimples th' unconscious lips into a smile.

* * * * *

In vain.—For now, with looks that doubly burn,
Shamed of their late defect my foes return;

They know their foil is short, and shorter still
The bliss that waits upon the Muse's will.
Back to their seats they rush, and reassume
Their ghastly rites, and sadden all the room.
O'er ears and brain the bursting wrath descends,
Cabals, misstatements, noise of private ends,
Doubts, hazards, crosses, cloud-compelling vapours,
With dire necessity to read the papers,
Judicial slaps that would have stung Saint Paul,
Costs, pityings, warnings, wits; and worse than all
(Oh for a dose of Thelwall[72] or of poppy)
The fiend, the punctual fiend, that bawls for copy!
Full in the midst, like that Gorgonian spell,
Whose ravening features glar'd collected hell,
The well-wigg'd pest his curling horror shakes,
And a *fourth* snap of threatening vengeance takes!
At that dread sight the Muse herself turns pale;
Freedom and fiction's self no more avail;
And lo! my Bower of Bliss is turned into a jail!

What then? What then my better genius cries:—
Scandals and jails! All these you may despise.
Th' enduring soul, that, to keep others free,
Dares to give up its darling liberty,
Lives wheresoe'er its countrymen applaud,
And in their great enlargement walks abroad.
But toils alone, and struggles hour by hour,
Against th' insatiate, gold-flush'd Lust of Power,
Can keep the fainting virtue of thy land
From the rank slaves that gather round his hand.
Be poor in purse, and Law will soon undo thee;
Be poor in soul, and self-contempt will rue thee.

I yield, I yield.—Once more I turn to you,
Harsh politics! and once more bid adieu
To the soft dreaming of the Muse's bowers,
Their sun-streak'd fruits and fairy-painted flowers;
Farewell for gentler times, ye laurell'd shades;
Farewell, ye sparkling brooks and haunted glades,

Where the trim shapes that bathe in moonlight eves,
Glance through the light and whisper in the leaves,
While every bough seems nodding with a sprite,
And every air seems hushing the delight.

Farewell, farewell, dear Muse, and all thy pleasure.
He conquers ease, who would be crown'd with leisure!

THE FEAST OF THE POETS.

1811.[73]

T'OTHER day, as Apollo sat pitching his darts
Through the clouds of November by fits and by starts,
He began to consider how long it had been
Since the bards of Old England a session had seen.[74]
"I think," said the God recollecting (and then
He fell twiddling a sunbeam, as I may my pen)
"I think—let me see—yes, it was, I declare,
As far back as the time of that Buckingham there:
And yet I can't see why I've been so remiss,
Unless it may be,—and it certainly is,—
That since Dryden's fine verses, and Milton's sublime,
I have fairly been sick of their sing-song and rhyme.
There was Collins, 'tis true, had a good deal to say,
But the dog had no industry, neither had Gray.
And Thomson, though dear to my heart, was too florid
To make the world see that their own taste was horrid.
So ever since Pope, my pet bard of the town,
Set a tune with his verses half up and half down,
There has been such a doling and sameness,—by Jove,
I'd as soon have gone down to see Kemble in love.
However, of late as they've rous'd them anew,
I'll e'en go and give them a lesson or two;
And as nothing in England is done without eating,
See what kind of set I can muster, worth treating.

So saying, the God bade his horses walk for'ard,
And leaving them, took a long drive to the nor'ard:

Then made for Mivart's; and as Gods who drop in do,
Came still as his beams through a drawing-room window.

And here I could tell, were I given to spin it,
How all the town shook, as the godhead came in it;
How bright look'd the poets, and brisk blew the airs,
And the laurels shot up in the gardens and squares:
But fancies like these, though I've stores to supply me,
I'd better keep back for a poem I've by me,
And merely observe that the girls look'd divine,
And the old folks in-doors exclaim'd, "Bless us, how fine!"

If you'd fancy, however, what Phœbus might be,
Imagine a shape above mortal degree,
Compounded of ardency, dignity, grace,
All fire, yet all self-possession; with face
That show'd him at once the true offspring of Jove,
The brow full of wisdom, and lips full of love;
For though he was beardless, and blooming of cheek,
And had deign'd in his dress to be classic and Greek,
Yet his look with a reach far remoter was wise,
And the soul of eternity thought through his eyes.

I wouldn't say more, lest my climax should lose;
Yet now I have mention'd these lamps of the muse,
I can't but observe what a splendour they shed,
When a warmth more than common enforc'd what he said:
Then the light which before flash'd in glimpse and in glance,
Seem'd to gather more substance, and burn in advance;
And if, as he shook back his hair in its cluster,
A curl fell athwart them and darken'd their lustre,
A sprinkle of gold through the duskiness came,
Like the sun through a tree, when he's setting in flame.

The God then no sooner had taken a chair,
And rung for the landlord to order the fare,
Than he heard a strange noise, and a knock from without,
And scraping and bowing came in *such* a rout!
There were all the worst playwrights from Dibdin to Terry,
All grinning, as who should say, "Shan't we be merry?"

With men of light comedy lumb'ring like bears up,
And men of deep tragedy patting their hairs up.

The God for an instant sat fix'd as a stone,
Till recovering, he said in a good-natur'd tone,
"Oh, the waiters, I see:—ah, it's all very well;
Only one of you'll do, just to answer the bell."
But Lord! to see all the great dramatists' faces!
They look'd at each other, and made such grimaces!
Then turning about, left the room in vexation:—
Their faces said plainly, "Well, this *is* damnation!"

The God fell a-laughing to see his mistake,
But stopp'd with a sigh for the poor drama's sake;
Then gave mine host orders, who bow'd to the floor,
And had scarcely back'd out, and shut gently the door,
When a hemming was heard, consequential and snapping,
And a sour little gentleman walk'd with a rap in.
He bow'd, look'd about him, seem'd cold, and sat down,
And said, "I'm surpris'd that you'll visit this town:
To be sure, there are one or two of us who know you,
But as to the rest, they are all much below you.
So stupid in gen'ral the natives are grown,
They really prefer Scotch reviews to their own,
So what with their taste, their reformers, and stuff,
They have sicken'd myself and my friends long enough."

"Yourself and your friends!" cried the God in high glee;
"And pray, my frank visitor, who may you be?"
"Who be!" said the other;—"why really—this tone—
William Gifford's a name, I think, pretty well known."[75]

"Oh, now I remember," said Phœbus:—"oh, true:
The Anti-La-Cruscan that writes the review:—
The rod, though 'twas no such vast matter, that fell
On that plague of the butterflies, did very well;
And there's something which even distaste must respect
In the self-taught example that conquer'd neglect:
But not to insist on the recommendations
Of modesty, wit, and a small stock of patience,

My visit just now is to poets alone,
And not to small critics, however well known."

So saying, he rang, to leave nothing in doubt,
And the sour little gentleman bless'd himself out.
But now came the men of right visiting claims;
I forget in what order, but here are the names.
There was Campbell, for Hope and fine war-songs renown'd,
With a wail underneath them of tenderer sound;
And Rogers, who follow'd, as Memory should;
And Scott, full of Scotland's old minstrelling mood
(The God overwhelm'd him with thanks for his novels)[76]
Then Crabbe, asking questions concerning Greek hovels;
And Byron, with eager indifference; and Moore,
With admiring glad eyes that came leaping before;
And Southey, with dust from the books on his shelf;
And Wordsworth, whose porcelain was taken for delf,[77]
And Coleridge, whose poetry's poetry's self.[78]
"And now," said the God,—but he scarcely had spoken,
But bang went the door—you'd have thought it was broken:
And in rush'd a mob with a scuffle and squeeze,
Exclaiming, "What! Coleridge, and fellows like these!
Nay then, we may all take our seats as we please."
I can't, if I would, tell you who they all were,
But a whole shoal of fops and of pedants were there,
All the *heart* and *impart* men, and such as suppose
They write like the Virgils, and Popes, and Boileaus.
The God smiled at first, with a turn tow'rd the fire,
And whisper'd, "There, tell 'em they'd better retire:"
But Lord! this was only to set all their quills up;
The rogues did but bustle, and pulling their frills up,
Stood fixing their faces, and stirr'd not an inch;
Nay, some took their snuff out, and join'd in a pinch.

Then wrath seiz'd Apollo; and turning again,
"Ye rabble," he cried, "common-minded and vain,
Whate'er be the faults which true bards may commit
(And most of them lie in your own want of wit),

Ye shall try, wretched creatures, how well ye can bear,
What such only witness, unsmote with despair."

He said; and the place all seem'd swelling with light,
While his locks and his visage grew awfully bright;
And clouds, burning inward, roll'd round on each side,
To encircle his state, as he stood in his pride;
Till at last the full Deity put on his rays,
And burst on the sight in the pomp of his blaze:
Then a glory beam'd round as of fiery rods,
Mid wraths of loud organs and chorister gods;
And faces of terrors celestial, that brought
Overwhelming compulsions and burdens of thought.
Yea, pleasures of heav'n turn'd horriblest pains,
And all which demands from potentiallest brains
Long reverent approach to the outermost bounds
Of a Presence Divine, whom its glory surrounds.

That sight and those terrors might not be sustain'd
But by such as in wonder's great school had been train'd,
And even the bards who had graciousness found,
After gazing a while, bow'd them down to the ground.
What then could remain for that feeble-soul'd crew?
Through the door in an instant they rush'd and they flew;
They rush'd, and they dash'd, and they scrambled and
stumbled,
And down the hall-staircase distractedly tumbled,
And never once thought which was head or was feet,
And slid through the hall, and fell plump in the street.
So great was the panic they struck with their flight,
That of all who had come to be feasted that night,
Not one ventured back, or would stay near the place:
Even Ireland declined, notwithstanding his face.[79]

But Phœbus no sooner had gain'd his good ends,
Than he put off his terrors, and rais'd up his friends,
Who stood for a moment entranced to behold
The glories subside, and the dim-rolling gold,
And listen'd to sounds, that with ecstasy burning
Seem'd dying far upward, like heaven returning.

Then " Come," cried the God, who resumed and restored
All the ease that could bless mortal guests at his board,
" Let us wake with the lips that we dip in our bowls
Earth's best bit of heaven—congenial souls."

So saying, he led through the door without state,
Each bard, as he follow'd him, blessing his fate;
And by some charm or other, as each took his chair,
There burst a most beautiful wreath in his hair.
I can't tell 'em all, but the groundwork was bay;
And Campbell, in his, had some oak-leaves and may;
And Southey a palm-branch, and Moore had a vine,
And pepper-leaf Byron, surmounted with pine;
And mountain-ash Wordsworth, with groundsel and yew;
And Coleridge the rare petals four, that endue
Their finder with magic; and, lovely to tell,
They sparkled with drops from Apollo's own well.[80]

Then Apollo put his on, that sparkled with beams,
And rich rose the feast as an epicure's dreams;
Not epicure civic, or grossly inclined,
But such as a poet might dream ere he dined:
For the God had no sooner determin'd the fare,
Than it turn'd to whatever was racy and rare:
The fish and the flesh, for example, were done,
On account of their fineness, in flame from the sun;
The wines were all nectar of different smack,
To which Muscat was nothing, nor Virginis Lac,
No, nor even Johannisberg, soul of the Rhine,
Nor Montepulciano, though king of all wine.[81]
Then, as for the fruits, you might garden for ages,
Before you could raise me such apples and gages;
And all on the table no sooner were spread,
Than their cheeks next the God blushed a beautiful red.
'Twas magic in short, and deliciousness all;
The very men-servants grew handsome and tall;
To velvet-hung ivory the furniture turn'd,
The service with opal and adamant burn'd;
Each candlestick changed to a pillar of gold,
While a bundle of beams took the place of the mould.

The decanters and glasses pure diamond became,
And the corkscrew ran solidly round into flame;—
In a word, so completely forestall'd were the wishes,
E'en harmony struck from the noise of the dishes.

It can't be suppos'd I should think of repeating
The fancies that flow'd at this laureat meeting:
I haven't the brains; and besides, wasn't there,
But the wit may be easily guess'd by the chair.

I must mention, however, that during the wine,
Our four greatest poets were toasted with nine:
Then others with six or with three as it fitted;
Nor were those who translate with a gusto, omitted.
On this, Southey begging the Deity's ear,—
"*I* know," interrupted Apollo, "'tis Frere:"[82]
And Walter look'd up too, and begged to propose—
"No, no," answer'd Phœbus, "I cannot add Rose;
Yet I love the man too;—here's a health to his prose."[83]
Then talking of lyrics, he call'd upon Moore,
Who sang such a song that they shouted "Encore!"
And the God was so pleas'd with his taste and his tone,
He obey'd the next call, and gave one of his own,—
At which you'd have thought—'twas so witching a warble,
The guests had all turn'd into listening marble;
The wreaths on their temples grew brightest of bloom,
As the breath of the Deity circled the room,
But the wine in the glasses went rippling in rounds,
As if follow'd and fann'd by the soft-winged sounds.

Thus chatting and singing they sat till eleven,
When Phœbus shook hands, and departed for heaven;
"For poets," he said, "who would cherish their powers
And hope to be deathless, must keep to good hours."
So off he betook him, their eyes looking forth
As like a long meteor he shot up the north;
For the Bear was his inn; and the Comet, they say,
Was his tandem in waiting to fetch him away.[84]

POSTSCRIPT.

'Twas in eighteen eleven those bards came to dine:
I now add a word in eighteen fifty-nine.
For divers times more did those nine laurell'd brothers
Receive invitations to dine with new others.
As Thurlow, to wit, with his old poet-strain,
Whose crotchets that way hurt a really fine vein;
And Keats, the God's own young historian of Gods;
With Shelley, diviner still, planning abodes
For earth to enjoy with surpassers of Plato;
And Landor, whom two Latin poets sent bay to
(Catullus and Ovid); with Procter, whose songs
Have made such sweet air of life's raptures and wrongs,
Besides setting free the true tongue of the stage
For Landor to join in full many a page,
And Shelley at Rome with so lofty a rage.[85]
Tom Hood too was feasted, strange glad and sad brain,
Whose mirth, you may notice, turns all upon pain.
His puns are such breeders of puns, in and in,
Our laughter becomes a like manifold din:
Yet a right poet also was Hood, and could vary
His jokes with deep fancies of Centaur and Fairy;
And aye on his fame will a tear be attending,
Who wrote the starv'd song, with its burden unending.

Now finish, my song, with one visitor more;
The good old boy's face—how it bloom'd at the door!
Hazlitt, painting it during its childhood, turn'd grim,
Saying, "D—n your fat cheeks!" then out louder,
"Frown, Jim."
Those cheeks still adorn'd the most natural of souls,
Whose style yet was not so—James Sheridan Knowles.
His style had been taught him in those his green days;
His soul was his own, and brought crowds to his plays.

Since then, many poets of new generations
Have doubtless receiv'd like divine invitations;
But where's the rash youth for their specifications?

BLUE-STOCKING REVELS;

OR,

THE FEAST OF THE VIOLETS.

(1837.)

CANTO I.

Showing what sort of rebuke Apollo gave his nymphs, and how gods furnish houses.

Lo! I, who in verse flowing smooth as the wine
(" Modest youth ! ") once recorded a dinner divine,[86]
And show'd the great god of the sun entertaining
With wit and crack'd walnuts the poets then reigning;
Now sing, in a dance fitter still for the crupper
Whose wings bore me thither a more divine supper;
For *that* was of man, though of Phœbus; but *this* is
Of Phœbus, and woman, and blue-stocking blisses.

The god, you must know then, like other bright souls,
Attends not to ev'ry dull curfew that tolls,
But often pays visits at night-time, and sits
Conversing till morning with beauties and wits
In guise of some talker renown'd,—my Carlyle,
Jeffrey, Coleridge, or Wilson;—joy listens the while;—
And in case he's too late for Aurora, they say,
Some proxy, I know not who, brings up the day;
Which is likely;—for after a night such as that,
The day, you may notice, is terribly flat.

Well; the eve of last May-day, his work being done,
Apollo sat playing his lute in the sun,
As backward his car in the deep began sinking;
And round it the Water-Nymphs, with their eyes winking,
Plash'd, patting the horses, and loos'ning the reins,
While the lute through the lustre sent flooding its strains,
When lo! he saw coming towards him, in pairs,
Such doves of Petitions, and loves of sweet Pray'rs,
All landing, as each touch'd his chariot, in sighs,
And begging his aid in behalf of bright eyes,

That it made him look sharper, to see whence they came :—
The windows on earth, at the flash of that aim,
Burst suddenly all into diamonds and flame.

"By Jove!" said Apollo, "well thought on.—I've dined
With the Poets :—'tis now highly proper, I find,
To descend (and with finger-tips here he fell trimming
His love-locks celestial) and sup with the Women."

He said; and some messages giving those daughters
Of Ocean,—arch-eyed,—buxom dancers in waters,—
They gave him some answer (I never heard what)
Which they paid for, i'faith, with a dance on the spot;
For shaking his locks, and a pleasant frown casting,
He thrust his car back with his foot everlasting,
And sprang up in air with a bound so divine,
As sous'd their sweet souls in the roar of the brine.
Then laughing the laugh of the gods, he rose higher,
And higher, and higher, on the whirl of his fire,
Lark mighty; till choosing his road, like the dove
Which bears at its warm bosom letters of love,
He shot, all at once, in a long trail of light,
Like the star that comes liquidly through the soft night,
And stood in a "House to Let," facing Hyde Park,
"Unfurnish'd;"—but not so, ye gods, before dark!

O Seddon! O Gillow! O Mr. Morell!
O Taprell and Holland! O Minter! O Snell!
O ev'ry one else, dear to new-married spouses,
Don't speak any more of your fitting up houses;
Don't mention your *Sèvres*, your *buhls*, *or-molus*,
And for ever henceforth have no customers, Hughes:
Quench the light of your lustres, great Perry and Co.:
Ye Bantings, be counted extremely so-so:
Nay, hold your tongue, Robins; amaze us no longer
In paragraphs, "coming it" stronger and stronger:
Cease roaring in great A, and wheedling in small;
And thou, even thou, greatest gusto of all,
Tasteful shade of magnificent, house-warming Guelph,
Turn about in thy tomb, and say, "Laid on the Shelf!"

The house not an instant had felt the god's presence,
When something—I know not what—but a quintessence
Of fragrance and purity hallow'd the place,
Some spirit of lilies, and crystal, and grace.
His height he had stoop'd, as he entered the door,
Tow'rds the human; but still his own costume he wore,
Or at least a Greek vest; and be sure he wore bay;
In short, was a kind of Apollo d'Orsay.
Then gliding from room to room, like a slow bee,
Half a foot from the floor, his lute went playing he,
And the sound was a magical charm to invest
Whatsoever he looked on with all he lik'd best;
Nor indeed was it strange that his lute should do this,
When Amphion, you know, built a city with his.

Thus the ball-room, whose wainscot was stucco before,
Rose in arches of flowers, midway from the floor,
All dabbled with dew-drops, and stirr'd with a breath;
While the rest (for no cold could give shoulders "their death,"
Where Phœbus was present) was all a fair sight
Of iv'ry, and cushions of silk, bridal white:—
(More colours for these would flow in with the ball:)
And betwixt the fair couches were services small
Of ices, and creams, and clear jellies, smooth-soul'd,
The very tip-ends of refreshment and cold.

Then the drawing-room—What, think ye, hung the walls there?
Cloth of gold? No, of sunbeams. 'Twas made of his hair.
The immense window-curtains, Calypso's own woollen,
Like clouds to the sunset, hung gorgeously sullen.

But as to the supper-room! O thou Aladdin,
Thy genii had found it a thing to go mad in;
Such wealth (which yet somehow fell soft on the eyes)
Branch'd it over with jewels of wonderful size,
All carv'd into fruit, thick and leafy, and all
Encrusting white marble, as vines do a wall.
The fruit, colour's minions, like ecstasy shone;
While the marble, most fair, and yet mellow of tone,

Came cooling the warmth, the rich masses between;
But the ceiling was one mighty sapphire serene,
From the centre of which, and their stamens of gold,
Lilies shed such a light, as 'twas peace to behold.

And forth, from all sides, issued tap'stry and table,
And sofa, with pictures of loveliest fable,
And portraits, with eyes that seem'd happy to come,
Of wits and sweet women; and every room
Had music, unseen in it, waiting to play;
A note now and then, would come chuckling away,
As though with its rapture it vainly was striving;—
And hark! the burst comes! the fair guests are arriving.

But first, I must tell you who form'd the spectators;—
Imprimis, the Poets, the happy Translators,
The Wits, the Physicians (they say that the godhead
To Knighton, Smith,[87] Elliotson, specially nodded;)
All Artists, all *Archers* (a bright blushing stare
Put a bud in the cheeks of their green-gownèd fair;)
The Musicians, the Singers (of course the chief only;)
And lastly (for fear any heart should feel lonely,
Although with a god,—and to crown it besides
With the sweetest of glories, *home*-glory,) all prides
Were consulted, of husbands, and friends, and relations,
And lovers, and children.—Of all adorations
Commend me to that, which enwrapt ev'ry feature
In love tow'rds the god, for this household good-nature.

"Well said!" cries the reader; "but stop, Mr. Poet;—
The god's invitation—pray how could they know it?
We hear of no message; no list had enroll'd 'em."
'Tis true; 'twas not wanted; their *Geniuses* told 'em;—
The Spirit that's born with us, but becomes visible
Solely with those to such suppers admissible.[88]
Beauteous it was, to see each how he led
His charge by the hand, with the flame on his head,
She walking, he gliding. It gave her such grace,
As made the crowd happy to look in her face

(For never did crowd gather yet at a door so);
The plain became handsome, the handsomest more so,
If plain any face can be call'd that has eyes
Such as almost all brain with its deep look supplies:
The music ceas'd playing, as each was presented;
And Silence, with sighs, 'twas so ultra-contented,
Felt tears in the eyes of its rapture, to see
How they kiss'd the god's hand, and their eyelids kiss'd he;
And then, on each entrance, there pour'd forth again
Some characteristic and exquisite strain,
And thus came each charmer of verse, or of story,
In a sort of sweet tempest of pleasure and glory.

I tell not the dresses. Suffice it that Titian
Had own'd himself conquer'd at *this* exhibition;
So rich were the colours! such autumn! such May!
For spirits and years made them more or less gay;
And the elder in orange and russet came, queenly;
The younger in lily and rose, sprinkled greenly:
The buxom, uniting both tastes, fill'd the doors
With their shoulders and frills, *à la Louis Quatorze*;
Or with robes *à l'antique*, and with crowns from their graperies:
Blest were the eyes that beheld their broad draperies!

CANTO II.

How the visitors were presented to Apollo, and what sort of a ball he gave them.

Now as to the names (how much less then the natures,
And writings, and beauties!) of all the dear creatures,
I boast not to mention the whole of them;—nay,
I live so sequester'd, so out of the way,
That perhaps I don't know them,—perhaps shall omit
Some bud of such promise, such sweet virgin wit,
Or for want of due reading, shall fail in due notice
Of some such delight of all earth's epiglottis,
That when I am told what I've done, I shall tear
From my head, in pure anguish, whole masses of hair:
You will think it a barber's shop all round my chair,

And yet, when I vow that I'll seize all occasion
Of loading "the love" with my best reparation,
My "startling," "intense," "truly new," "soul-subduing,"
And other fond truths of impartial reviewing,
I fancy I hear her, in tones of caresses,
Exclaim, "God preserve his dear elderly tresses!"

Lo! first then (for not in stern order of fame,
But in blest alphabetical order they came,
Though she that first enter'd, well headed the dears)
Mrs. Adams,[89] rare mistress of thought and of tears;
Then Aikin judicious;—discreet Mrs. Austin,
Whose English her German you'll never find lost in;—
And Madame d'Arblay, mighty grave all the while,
Yet at heart smitten still betwixt fun and a style,
And longing to tell us more ladies' distresses
'Twixt lords, and vulgarians, and debts for their dresses.
So deep was her curtsey, the hoop that she wore
Seem'd fairly conveying her right through the floor.

But up she swam round, and Miss Baillie succeeded:
No queen could have come with such pages as she did;
For who, do you think, held her train up?—The Passions:
They did indeed; all too in elegant fashions.
The god in his arms with gay reverence lock'd her,
For two sakes,—her own, and her brother's, the doctor.

A young lady then, whom to miss were a *caret*
In any verse-history, named, I think, Barrett,
(I took her at first for a sister of Tennyson)
Knelt, and receiv'd the god's kindliest benison.
—"Truly," said he, "dost thou share the blest power
Poetic, the fragrance as well as the flower;
The gift of conveying impressions unseen,
And making the vaguest thoughts know what they mean."

"Lady Blessington!" cried the glad usher aloud,
As she swam through the doorway, like moon from a cloud:
I know not which most her face beam'd with,—fine creature!
Enjoyment, or judgment, or wit, or good-nature.

Perhaps you have known what it is to feel longings
To pat silken shoulders at routs, and such throngings;—
Well, think what it was at a vision like that!
A Grace after dinner! A Venus grown fat!
Some "Elderly Gentleman" risked an objection;
But this only made us all swear her "perfection."
His arms the host threw round the liberal bodice,
And kiss'd her, exactly as god might do goddess.

Betham, Blackwood, Bowles, Bray, and Miss Browne,
too, were there;
What a sweet load of B's! But then what a despair!
For I know not their writings. (I'm tearing my hair!)

Cary Burney came next,[90] so precise yet so trusting,
Her heroines are perfect, and yet not disgusting.
"However," said Phœbus, "I can't quite approve them:
Conceit follows close on the mere right to love them."

Then came Fanny Butler, perplex'd at her heart
Betwixt passion and elegance, nature and art;
The daughter of sense and of grace, yet made wroth
With her own finer wit by o'er-straining at both.
Phœbus smil'd on her parents, who stood there in sight,
And quoted some lines from her play about "Night."

Marg'ret Cullen succeeded, whose novels one lives in,
Like one of her hamlets, where talk never gives in;
Dear, kind-hearted, arch-humour'd, home-loving dame;
And to sum up all eulogy,—worthy her name.[91]
"You make me sleep sometimes," quoth Phœbus, "'tis true;
But I do even that, let me tell you, with few."

"Lady Dacre."—'Twas pleasant to see the god raise,
In honour of her and of Petrarch, his bays.[92]
"And how go your own winged horses?" quoth he:
Then he asked after Margaret Gillies and Mee,
Seyffarth, Carpenter, Robertson, Barrett, and Sharp,
The Corbaux, the Chalons:—in short, more than his harp

Has strings to outnumber, or haste can disclose;
And look'd at the gall'ries, and smil'd as they rose:
For they all sat together, in colours so rare
They appear'd like a garden, enchanting the air;
But what pleas'd me hugely, he call'd to my wife,
And said, "You have done Shelley's mood to the life."
Some lady musicians completed the bower,
At head of whom earnestly gaz'd Betsy Flower.

At the sight of Miss Edgeworth, he said, "Here comes one,
As sincere and as kind as lives under the sun;
Not poetical, eh?—nor much giv'n to insist
On utilities not in utility's list
(Things, nevertheless, without which the large heart
Of my world would but play a poor husk of a part),
But most truly, within her own sphere, sympathetic,
And that's no mean help tow'rds the practic-poetic."
Then, smiling, he said a most singular thing,—
He thank'd her for making him "saving of string"!!
But for fear she should fancy he didn't approve her in
Matters more weighty, prais'd much her "Manœuvring;"
A book, which if aught could pierce craniums so dense,
Might supply cunning folks with a little good sense.
And her Irish (he added) poor souls! so impressed him,
He knew not if most they amus'd or distress'd him.

No fault had Miss Ferrier to find with her lot;
She was hail'd by the god as the "lauded of Scott."

"Mrs. Gore." Phœbus open'd his arms, with a face,
In the gladness of which was the coming embrace.
"For her satire," he said, "wasn't evil, a bit;
But as full of good heart, as of spirits and wit;
Only somewhat he found, now and then, which dilated
A little too much on the fashions it rated,
And heaps of 'Polite Conversation' so true,
That he, once, really wish'd the three volumes were two;
But not when she dwelt upon daughters or mothers;
Oh, then the three made him quite long for three others;

And poor 'Mrs. Armytage,' warning exaction,
Sits arm-chair'd forever, a dread petrifaction.
Then how much good reading! what fit flowing words!
What enjoyment, whether midst houses or herds!
'Twas the thinking of men with the lightness of birds!"

Never prais'd be prose-love in a style so poetic.—
Then he kiss'd Mrs. Gillies by right sympathetic,
And somebody smiling, and looking askance,
He said, "*Honi soit*, my friend, *qui mal y pense;*
What in gods is a right and confirms a good fame,
Were in you a presumption. The same's not the same."
And with this profound speech, and a bow to the dame
(Whom he thank'd for "Cleone," and "Gentile and Jew,"
And for other things far more didactic and blue,
But advis'd for the future, to preach reformation
With all of her sweets, and no exacerbation)
He rais'd Mrs. Hall from her rev'rence profound,
Saying, "Nonsense, my dear; clasp me honestly round:—
For the gods love the pleasure you take, 'tis so hearty,
In all sorts of characters, careless of party."

And now came Miss Hamilton. Phœbus presented
A look to her curtsey so little contented,
It seem'd less for poetess fit than for beldam!
In fact, she provok'd him by writing so seldom.

Mrs. Hoffland he tenderly welcom'd and styled
"Good motherly soul;" and benignantly smiled
On the close cap of Howitt. These Muse Quakeresses
Are Noes (he said) turn'd to the sweetest of Yesses.

Lo! Jameson accomplish'd; and Lamb, the fine brain,
(News of Charles in Elysium brought balm to its pain;)
And Landon, whose grief is so dulcet a treasure,
We'd weep to oblige her, but can't for the pleasure.

"Ah! welcome home, Martineau, turning statistics
To stories, and puzzling your philogamystics!

I own I can't see, any more than dame Nature,
Why love should await dear good Harriet's dictature!
But great is earth's want of some love-legislature.

"And Mitford, all hail! with a head that for green
From your glad village crowners can hardly be seen."
And with that he shone on it, and set us all blinking:
And yet at her kind heart sat tragedy, thinking.

Then Montagu,—Eleanora Louisa!
Was ever name finer, 'twixt Naples and Pisa?
But not in name only, the lady hath merit;
Her thoughts have an eye, and the right inward spirit.

And dear Lady Morgan! Look, look how she comes,
With her pulses all beating for freedom, like drums,—
So Irish, so modish, so *mixtish*, so wild,
So committing herself, as she talks, like a child,
So trim yet so easy, polite yet big-hearted,
That truth and she, try all she can, won't be parted.
She'll put on your fashions, your latest new air,
And then talk so frankly, she'll make you all stare:—
Mrs. Hall may say "Oh," and Miss Edgeworth say "Fie,"
But my lady will know all the what and the why.
Her books, a like mixture, are so very clever,
The god himself swore he could read them forever;
Plot, character, freakishness, all are so good;
And the heroine's herself playing tricks in a hood.
So he kiss'd her, and call'd her "eternal good wench;"
But asked, why the devil she spoke so much French?

"Mrs. Norton." The god, stepping forward a pace,
Kiss'd her hand in return, with respect in his face,
But said, "Why indulge us with nothing but sighs?
You best prove your merits when cheerful and wise:
Be still so; be just to the depth of your eyes."
Then he turn'd to us all, and repeated in tones
Of approval so earnest as thrill'd to one's bones,
Some remarks of hers (bidding us learn them all too)
On the art of distinguishing false love from true.

After which, as he seated her near him, he cried,
" 'Twas a large heart, and loving, that gave us this guide." [93]

Well advanc'd, at this juncture, with true loving eyes,
Mrs. Opie, delightful for hating " White Lies."
"Good Temper," too, prince of the Lares (God bless him,) owes
Thousands of thanks to her nice duodecimos.[94]
—" What! and *you* too must turn Quakeress, must you?"
Cried Phœbus;—" well, spite of your costume I'll trust you:
Though truth, you dear goose, as all born Quakeresses
Will tell you has nothing in common with dresses:
Besides, 'tis blaspheming my colours and skies:—
However, it shows you still young, and that's wise;
And since you must needs have no fault let us see
If you can't mend it somehow, betwixt you and me."
He said; and threw round her a light of such love,
As turn'd her slate hues to the neck of the dove.

Enter Pardoe all spirits, and Porter all state,
But sweet ones, like ladies whom knights made elate,
(The latter wore some foreign order, whose name
I forget; but it well graced the chivalrous dame.)
Then hearty good Roberts; and Roche (dear old deathless
Regina, whose lovers my boyhood made breathless,)[95]
And Shelley, four-fam'd,—for her parents, her lord,
And the poor lone impossible monster abhorr'd.[96]
(So sleek and so smiling she came, people stared,
To think such fair clay should so darkly have dared;
But Apollo the very name lov'd so, he turn'd
To a glory all round her, which shook as it burn'd,
And a whirlwind of music came sweet from the spheres);—
Then his shape he resum'd, with a bay round his ears,
And on Sheridan smil'd, name with wit ever found,
And on Somerville, head most surprisingly crown'd;
For instead of the little Loves, laughing at colleges,
Round it, in doctors' caps, flew little Knowledges!
Then came young Twamley, nice sensitive thing,
Whose pen and whose pencil give promise like spring;
Then Whitfield,—then Wortley,—and acridly bright
In her eyes, but sweet-lipp'd, the slaves' friend, Fanny Wright.

And now came the dance; for, lo! catching up two,
Since the guests had all come, Phœbus made, as he flew,
A grace and a beauty of waiving decorum
(For wit and warm heart carry all things before 'em)
And leading the way, swept them off to the ball,
Into which he plung'd instantly, music and all;
For the band felt his coming, and gave such a rare
Storm of welcome, as seem'd to blow back his bright hair;
And so he came whirling it, gods! how divinely!
The hearts of the whole room, I warrant, beat finely:
In fact, hadn't he himself kept their wits sound,
The room, the whole evening, had seem'd going round:
But, what was amazing, he so danc'd with all,
He suffic'd for the total male part of the ball!
Not as dancer theatrical, making a show
(Bah!—shocking to think of—Excessively *no!*)
But gentlemen-god-like, and all *comme-il-faut.*
Now with one, now with t'other he danc'd, now with *ten!*
For your god in his dancing is several men.
Fanny Butler he waltz'd with; he jigg'd it with Morgan;
With Hall he developed the rigadoon organ;
To Pardoe he show'd Spain's impassioned velocity;
Norton, the minuet's high reciprocity.
—Then he took Landon, ere she was aware,
Like a dove in a whirlwind, and whisk'd her in air;
Or as Zephyr might catch up some rose-haunting fay,
Or as Mercury once netted Flora, they say:[97]
And then again, stately, like any *Sultàn*
With his Queen, he and Blessington trod a *pavàun,*—
Which meaneth a "peacock dance." Truly 'twas grand to see
How they came spreading it, *pavoneggiàndosi!*[98]
—Up, at the sight, rose the oldest at last,
And join'd in a gen'ral dance, "furious and fast,"
With which the god mingled, like fire in a wheel,
Pervading it, golden; till reel after reel,
Bearing sheer off its legs with them giddy three-score,
They spun to the supper-room, clean through the door.
Then quoth Madame d'Arblay, panting much from her journey,
"Well—*this* beats my father himself, Doctor Burney!!"

CANTO III.

Of the supper that Apollo gave his visitors, and with what sort of spectacle and of after-course he amazed them.

You remember those supper-room walls, made of flowers,
Which beat whatsoever for dead paramours
The lords of the east in white temples have done,
Where in emeralds and rubies fond epitaphs run?[99]
Well,—a gallery lurk'd sweetly behind them; and there
We spectators, scarce knowing what took us, or where,
Got somehow, as soon as the guests had down sat 'em,
And found ourselves gazing most snugly down at 'em.

And thus as they sat before supper, to rest 'em,
Fresh airs through the rooms came increasing, and blest 'em;
So sweet, all grew silent, exchanging rapt looks;
And the silence ran thick with a bubbling of brooks.—

Not long:—for commingling, by finest degrees,
With the stir of the foliage, and swell of the breeze,
A concert arose,—so delicious, so new,
So earnest, so fond, so appealing to *you*,
The notes seem'd to bathe in the tears which they drew.

Then there issued (get Vincent Novello, some day,
To show you the strain, for he took it away,)
A world-heavy gust, like all organs in one,
Or as though had swept earthward the roar of the sun,
Or the face of some god with his thunder-loud tresses,
Who comes like a terror, stays gently, and blesses,
And leaves us secure in the strength of humility.
—Phœbus however, with host-like civility,
Tried them no farther with godhead so grave:
To his sprites, on the sudden, blithe orders he gave,
And quoting the line about "lips being fed,"
(Which applied not alone to one heaven, he said,
For ambrosia and nectar sustain'd the realms upper)
There rose, veil'd in mist, to soft music, a supper.

Very beauteous the mist was,—thin, white, with a bloom;
An odour of violets fill'd the whole room;

Ever trembled the music; and as the mist clear'd,
First, bunches of violets gently appeared,—
Then silver,—then gold,—then the tops of decanters
Of diamond,—then peaches, those cheek-like enchanters,
And other fruit, some in white baskets, and some
Enleaf'd on the bough, with a dew on the plum;
Then dishes, half seen, fit to make a physician
Turn glutton, from dairies and pastures Elysian;
The peaches hung over them, ready to drip;
And now the guests sat, and the mirth was let slip,
And white went the fingers from foliage to lip.
Then the music came sweet over all, like the sound
Of their fame; and behind ev'ry lady stood, crown'd
With the flame on his forehead, her Genius, who went
To and fro with his pinions, on messages bent
'Twixt her friends and herself, some sweet fruit or sweet word;
And aye at the table sweet laughter was heard.
But the best of it was, the god's wit so embrac'd
The whole room with its kindness and exquisite taste,
Every guest seem'd to feel his arm round her own waist.

And well might seem palpable all which he said!
For as Pallas leap'd arm'd out of Jupiter's head,
So gods, when they please, utter *things*, and not *words!*
'Tis a fact!—solid visions!—clouds, armies, trees, herds:—
You see them—nay, feel them. Thus, talks he of roses?
They come, thick and globy, caressing your noses.
Of music? 'tis heard: of a sword? you may grasp it:
Of love, and the bosom you long for? you clasp it.[100]

Conceive then the joy, when in toasting the women
Whom wit hath made deathless, *we saw them all swim in!*
Each crossing the end of the room!—What a sight!
The guests thrust their chairs back at first, in a fright.
I declare I beheld them so plainly, it took
All the self-command in me (so sweet was her look)
Not to jump from the gallery, and kiss Mrs. Brooke.[101]
Lady Winchelsea cost me still more to go through it;[102]
But at Lady Ann Barnard, I said "I *must* do it"[103]

I cannot name all who thus issued from air,
As the god made us see them;—but Sappho was there,
As brown as a berry, and little of size;
But Lord! with such midnight and love in her eyes!
Aspasia's however we thought still more loving:
Heart sat in their pupils, and gentlest approving.
We saw (only fancy it!) Pericles hand her;
And both (I can testify) look'd up at Landor.
Of Romans (whose women more startle than lull us)
Came none but the dame that's bound up with Tibullus;[104]
But France furnished many, and Italy fair;
The laurel look'd sweet in their wild flowing hair.
Colonna came noble, in widow's black gown;[105]
And Stampa, who worshipp'd a living renown;[106]
Navarre's fair Boccaccio;[107] the Rope-maker too;[108]
Deshoulieres, kind and pensive; De Launay the true;[109]
Sévigné, good mother, a little too fussy;
But how, when she will, she beats Walpole and Bussy!
Old selfish Du Deffand, more knowing than wise;
And Genlis didactic, and D'Houdetot's eyes;[110]
And De Staël, mighty mistress, *par Napoleoni*,
(For so he would make her,) and dear Riccoboni;[111]
Then Newcastle's Duchess, fantastic but rare;[112]
And Behn and Centlivre, that plain-spoken pair;
And Wortley, who, had she been bred in a haram,
Had turn'd it, infallibly, all harum-scarum;
And sweet Brooke aforesaid, all cover'd with May,
And Lady Ann, lovely for "Auld Robin Gray;"
And dearest dear Winchelsea, whom I prefer,
After all, she so jumps with me, even to her:
(For although Lady Ann lov'd maternity, *she*
Lov'd love and the trees so, she might have lov'd me:)
But I see high-born Devonshire, who with such pith
Wrote of Tell and his platform;[113] and poor Charlotte Smith,
Whose muse might have bless'd so her nooks and old houses,
Had lawyers not plagued her, and debts of her spouse's:
And Tighe, her own Psyche: and Elliott, sweet Jane,
Who made the lone dairies mourn Flodden again;[114]
And Radcliffe, fear-charm'd, ever breathlessly creeping
Through castles and corridors, frightful to sleep in:

Then Barbauld, fine teacher, correcting impatience,
Or mounting the stars in divine meditations;[115]
Thrale, Brunton, Trefusis, her heart pit-a-patting,
And Hemans, behind her grand organ-loft chatting;
With others I can't well remember at present,
Except Hannah More, looking very unpleasant.

You'll fancy there could not have possibly been
A sight now, which females would sooner have seen
Than all this; and in truth, when you mark, in a street,
How they turn and inspect ev'ry bonnet they meet,
And how light, in comparison, seem to hold men,
'Tis a point I shall leave to some weightier pen.
Only pray be assur'd, that whatever the case,
It tells not a jot to our sex's disgrace;
And for this simple reason,—that *us* they are sure of,
But each other's claims are not quite so secure of.
Thus much I can swear,—that what follow'd this show
Was a sight made their cheeks with new gratitude glow,
And that half the dear souls fell in love on the spot,
And with posthumous men too! gallants living not!
Alas! did I say so? Oh impious misgiving!
Than Shakspeare and Petrarch pray who are more living?
Whose words more delight us? whose touches more *touch?*
For these were the shapes that now pass'd us,—all such
As the sex should most long to see, out of all story,—
The men that have done them most honour and glory.

First, Homer Andromache brought, like his child;
And beside them was Helen, who blushingly smil'd;—
Old trav'ller was he, and he walk'd with a sword.
Then Antigone came with the Samian lord,
Close-clinging, yet gentle.—Then Petrarch appear'd,
Looking still on the face by down-looking endear'd;
First exalter of animal passion with mind.
Him follow'd, still modestly keeping behind,
With book under arm, and in scholarly gown,
(Oh! ill have the gross understood his renown!)[116]
Boccaccio, with faces a martyr might bless,
Griselda's among them, the patient excess.

Her look was the sweetest that never knew laughter;
And backward she turn'd tow'rds the shape that came after,
Great Chaucer. As humbly as maiden went he.
Young queens held their diadems of him in fee;
Young mothers and beauties, clear angels of earth;
I know not which grac'd them most, sorrow or mirth.

Great Cervantes was next, fine romance-loving soul
(For his very jest lov'd it), with whom came a shoal
Of such blithe and sweet beauties, some courtly, some nurst
In Arcadia, I thought they were Shakspeare's at first;
But when *he* came, good Lord! what a heaven upon earth
Of young beauty was there! what sweet sorrow and mirth!
What most womanly women! what passion all beauteous
With patience! What love irrepressibly duteous!
What players at boyhood, as sweet as in gown!
What bosoms, where care might forever lie down!
Did heav'n keep a boarding-school, these were its blushers;—
But Shakspeares would never have done for the ushers.

The women at table, I thought, at this sight,
For pure, tongue-tied bliss, would have fainted outright;
But Apollo in pity dismiss'd it; and brought
Richard Steele on the carpet, the heart of light thought;
Who pass'd, with his wit and his wig, midst a bevy
Of hoops and bright eyes, as if bound for a levee;
Some cheeks were among them, more sweet for a sprinkle
Of tears; and the dupe of that horrid beast, Inkle.
Steele led by the hand his own wife in the crowd,
And as if reassuring her, kiss'd it, and bow'd.

In *discourse* of this kind, and such rapturous expressions
As perfectly scorn'd all the old self-possessions,
(For really I can't say which rattled most gaily,
Dear frank Lady Morgan, or quiet Miss Bailey;
Though somebody said, that tow'rds three, Mrs. Hall
Was, beyond any question, the merriest of all:
And I'm told that Miss Edgeworth became so vivacious,
The damsels from boarding-school whispered, "My gracious!")

In talk of this kind, and a world of sweet will,
Which turn'd all our heads ('tis in mine dancing still)
The delight ran its rounds, till 'twas time to break up;
When Apollo, instead of the old parting cup,
(Which with ladies might not have been quite so decorous)
Exclaim'd, "Set the new parting dishes before us."

No sooner exclaim'd than accomplish'd. Behold
Ev'ry guest had a cover of exquisite mould,
Rich yet simple, of porcelain. Angelica's self
Had had twice her attractions, with one on her shelf.
The sides were all painted, not only with Muses
And Loves, but with Lares, and sweet Household Uses:
Good Temper was laying a cloth for Good Heart,
And the Graces were actually making a tart!
Each cover for knob had a ruby, heart-shap'd;
And the whole stood on legs, with white elegance drap'd,—
Legs bewitching, most feminine, tipp'd with a shoe;
And the stockings (mark that!) were a violet blue.

All the room fell a whispering;—"What can they be?"
"Is it sweets?"—"concert-tickets?"—"It cannot be tea?"
"I'd give millions to know," said Miss Porter. "And I,"
Said Miss Barrett, "my head." Said Miss Landon, "I'd die."
"You may see it *ex pede*," said Mrs. Gore, chuckling:
"'Tis something dress'd *à la Sir John—à la Suckling*."[117]

And 'twas so.—O Suckling, O gallant Sir John,
Thou gentleman poet, first plume of the *ton;*
Who the reign of two Charleses by anticipation
Didst mingle in one with thy cordial flirtation;
Fresh painter of "Weddings," great author of rare
"Poet-Sessions," and *petit-soupés* to the fair;
Unto whom thou didst make happy milliner-loves
With *bijou* for the sweetmeats, and dishes of gloves,
And sent'st home the darlings in flutters of fan,
At the wit of the thought of the exquisite man!
O *facile princeps* of "wit about town,"
What a bay clips thee now! What a crown above crown!

Homer's self had but men for his copiers; but thee
Homer's very god copies, thou great *bel esprit!*

The genius that stood behind each lady's chair,
From her dish took the cover; when forth, in glad air,
Leap'd a couple of small merry Loves, who display'd
What d'ye think?—a new girdle? a busk? a new braid?
No;—the sweetest Blue Stockings that ever were made.
The blue was a violet, fresh as first love;
And the garters were blush-colour, mingled with dove.

To describe the "sensation" produced by this sight,
The dismays, pretty doubtings, the laughs, the delight,
Were a task I should never have done, if I told ye,
And haste does not let me; for lo and behold ye!
As doves round a house-top, in summer-time blue,
Take a sudden stoop earthwards, and sweep from the view,
So the Loves, one and all, rising first with a clapping
Of pinions, pass'd by us, tempestuously flapping;
Then stoop'd, quick as lightning, and gliding right under
The table, all vanish'd!—A shriek of sweet wonder
Rose sudden and brief, as of fear come and gone;
And 'twas felt thro' the room, that the stockings were *on!*

Mute, curious, respectful (for all were inspir'd
With the feelings so nice an occasion requir'd)
We sat for some moments, as still as Apollo's
Own table; till sweet, as when breath fills the hollows
Of organs, mild waking,—he utter'd what follows:—

"Dear souls with fine eyes (may they never be kiss'd
By a fool!) fear no more the mistakes that exist
With regard to these footings of yours, and their blue;
Fear no more the confusion of false and of true;
Strange confusion at any time, seeing its grounds!
For who, in his taste, sweet and bitter confounds?
And whence rose it? An authoress, once on a time,[118]
Could discover, it seems, no such wonderful crime
In the legs of an honest old soul at her party,
Who came in his blue stockings, ancient and hearty,
(Ben Stillingfleet namely, fine-hearted old codger;
A loving old bachelor,—real Sir Roger;)

But coxcombs (themselves a pedantical crew)
Palm'd, in spite, upon *her*, the old gentleman's blue;
And thence, by as clever and handsome transition,
Assum'd it of all in like letter'd condition.
As nicknames, however, are things we've a dread of
In heaven itself, they're so hard to get rid of,
And as the best way to divert their abuse
(If we use them at all) is to give them *right* use,
I hereby ordain, that in future the word
Be confined to the masculine, vain, and absurd,
And that all real women, ev'n though they may speak
Not with Sappho's eyes only, but even her Greek,
All the flow'rs of the flock, the true breathers of sweets,
Take their name from the queen of the sylvan retreats;
From the hue which but now had your eyes fix'd upon it,—
The Violet,—charmer of all that light on it.
No Blue," 'twill be said, "is the she who so bears her;
She's VIOLET:—happy the bosom that wears her."

Here somebody happening to cough where we sat,
Phœbus threw up a frown at us none could look at,—
An eye of so sudden a flame and tremendous,
I thought he was going to "flare up" and end us;
But seeing us all look submissive, he shone
With the former mild beams in his hair, and went on:—

"And in truth it depends on yourselves, darling creatures,
Which shade of the hue shall illustrate your natures;
For though ye set out with the right one, nay, though
I myself, as I now do, the blessing bestow,
Yet the stockings themselves, I must tell you, are *fated*,
And just as they're worn, will be lov'd or get hated;
Remaining *true violet*,—glimpses of heaven,—
As long as you're wise, and your tempers are even.
But if you grow formal, or fierce, or untrue,
Alas, gentle colour! sweet ankle, adieu!
Thou art chang'd; and Love's self at the changing looks *blue*.
Seize the golden occasion then.—You, who already
Are gentle,[119] remain so; and you, who would steady

Your natures, and mend them, and make out your call
To be men's best companions, be such, once for all.
And remember, that nobody, woman or man,
Ever charm'd the next ages, since writing began,
Who thought by shrewd dealing sound fame to arrive at,
Had one face in print, and another in private.

"UNAFFECTEDNESS, GENTLENESS, LOVINGNESS.—This
Be your motto. And now give your teacher a kiss."

He said: and the whole house appearing to rise,
Rooms and all, in a rapture of love, tow'rds the skies,
He did really, by some divine privilege of his,
Give and take of the dames an ubiquitous kiss;
Which exalted us all so, and rapt us so far,
We undoubtedly touch'd at some exquisite star;
Very likely the morning star, Venus's own,
For the odour proclaim'd it some violet zone:
And to prove 'twas no dream, any more than the bedding
Which Prince Camaralzaman had or Bedredden,
I woke, just as they did, at home, about seven,
The moment Miss Landon was saying "Good Heaven!"

THE ST. JAMES'S PHENOMENON.

BEING A SURPRISING NEW BALLAD, ON A MOST WONDERFUL CREATURE NOW EXHIBITING IN WESTMINSTER.[120]

GOOD people all, attend now,
And I'll tell ye of such a monster,
As shall make your eyes
Be double their size,
And the hats that ye have on stir.

I'm aware there've been before this
As pretty frights as may be,
Two sisters in one,
And babes like a tun,
And much worse things than they be.

For I've heard of an unlegg'd body
That went about on castors,
And a head that would come
Bolt into a room,
And cry, "How now, my masters!"

But Lord! all these were handsome
To the one I'm going to mention;
To whom a shark
Is a perfect spark,
And an ogre deserves a pension.

Hard by St. James's Palace
You may see this prince of shockings,
But not before three,
For at one, d'ye see,
He begins to put on his stockings.

His head, or else what should be
In the place that's on his shoulders,
Is nothing but hair
Frizz'd here and there,
To the terror of all beholders.

That it has a mouth, is clear from
His drinkings and his vap'rings;
But all agree
That he cannot see,
For he'll take a pig for *a* prince.

To tell you what his throat is,
Is a matter a little puzzling;
But I should guess,
That more or less,
It was forty yards of muslin.

His shoulders are very curious,
And really none of the wildest;
For both are made
Of cane inlaid;
And here, they say, he's mildest.

Of his fingers a tailor tells me
(For one here and there the truth picks)
That the right, when they span,
Are a lady's fan,
And the left a start of tooth-picks.

His legs are just like barrels
With butts of leather on 'em;
Yet some declare
That without great care
He can't stand long upon 'em.

But his body, his body's the wonder,
For a lady who touch'd the surface,
Look'd pale and said,
'Twas a positive bed:—
I wish you had seen *her* face.

His organs of digestion
Make a noise like the wheels of mangles;
His tongue's a skin,
And hollow within;
And his teeth are dice at angles.

For the rest there's no deciding;
But it's fully believed on all hands,
That his brains are veal,
And his heart of steel,
And his blood rum-punch and hollands.

N. B. Behave respectful;
For if he thinks you flout him,
He's got a big
Old Judge's wig,
Wherewith he lays about him.

CORONATION SOLILOQUY

OF HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE THE FOURTH.

1821.[121]

To the tune of *Amo, amas,*
I love a lass
As cedar tall and slender;
Sweet cowslip's grace,
Is her nominative case,
And she's of the feminine gender.
Horum quorum,
Sunt divorum,
Harum, scarum, divo;
Tag rag, merry derry, periwig and hatband,
Hic, hoc, harum, genitivo.

O'Keefe.

I.

Rego, regis,
Good God, what's this?
What, only half my Peeries!
Regas, regat,
Good God, what's that?
The voice is like my deary's!
Oh, no more there;
Shut the door there;
Harum, scarum, strife O!
Bags, Bags,[122] Sherry Derry, periwigs, and fat lads,
Save us from our wife O!

II.

I decline a
C. Regina,
Rex alone's more handsome:
Oh what luck, Sir,
Exit uxor!
Rursus ego a man *sum.*
Glory, glory!
How will story
Tell how I was gazed at!
Perfect from my pumps, to the plumes above my hat-band,
All are me amazed at!

III.

Yes, my hat, Sirs,
Think of that, Sirs,
Vast, and plumed, and Spain-like:
See my big,
Grand robes; my wig
Young, yet lion-mane like.
Glory! glory!
I'm not hoary;
Age it can't come o'er me:
Mad caps, grave caps, gazing on the grand man,
All alike adore me.

IV.

I know where
A fat, a fair,
Sweet other self is doting:
I'd reply
With wink of eye,
But fear the newsman noting.
Hah! the Toying,[123]
Never cloying,
Cometh to console me:
Crowns and sceptres, jewellery, state swords,—
Who now shall control me?

V.

Must I walk now!
What a baulk now!
Non est regis talis.
O, for youth now!
For in truth now,
Non sum eram qualis.
Well, well, roar us,
On before us,
Harum, flarum, stout O,
Stately, greatly, periwig and trumpets,—
Oh, could I leave but my gout O!

VI.

What a *dies!*
How it fri-es!
Handkerchiefs for sixty.
Approbatio!
Sibilatio!
How I feel betwixt ye![124]
Curlies, burlies,
Dukes and earlies,
Bangs and clangs of band O!
Shouty, flouty, heavy rig, and gouty,
When shall I come to a stand O!

VII.

Bliss at last!
The street is pass'd;
The aisle—I've dragg'd me through it:
Oh the rare
Old crowning chair!
I fear I flopp'd into it.[125]
Balmy, balmy,
Comes the psalmy;
Bland the organ blows me;
Crown down coming on a periwig that fits me,
All right royal shows me!

VIII.

Oh how *bona*
My *corona!*
Sitting so how *dulcis!*
My *oculus* grim,
And my *sceptrum* slim,
And proud, as I hold it, my pulse is!
Shout us, chorus;
Organs, roar us;
Realms, let a secret start ye:—
Dragon-killing George on the coin is myself,
And the dragon is Bonaparte.[126]

IX.

And yet alas!
Must e'en *I* pass

Through hisses again on foot, Sirs!
Oh pang profound!
And I now walk crown'd,
And with sceptre in hand to boot, Sirs!
I go, I go,
With a fire in my toe,
I'm bowing, blasting, baking!
Hall, O Hall, ope your doors, and let your guest in;
Every inch I'm à—king.

X.

But now we dine!
Oh word divine,
Beyond what e'en has crown'd it!
Envy may call
Great monarchs small,
But feast, and you dumb-found it.
Brandy, brandy,
To steady me handy
For playing my knife and fork, O!
Green fat, and devilry,[127] shall warrant me ere bed-time,
In drawing my twentieth cork O.

XI.

Hah, my Champy![128]
Plumy, trampy!
Astley's best can't beat him!
See his frown!
His glove thrown down!
Should a foe appear, he'd eat him!
Glory, glory,
Glut and glory,—
I mean poury,
Glut and poury,—
Poury, mory,
Splash and floory,
Crown us, drown us, *vivo!*[129]
Cram dram, never end, plethora be d—n'd, man;
Vivat Rex dead-alive O!

HIGH AND LOW; OR, HOW TO WRITE HISTORY.

SUGGESTED BY AN ARTICLE IN A REVIEW FROM THE PEN OF SIR WALTER SCOTT, IN WHICH ACCOUNTS ARE GIVEN OF MASSANIELLO AND THE DUKE OF GUISE.

"I noticed a deserted corpse that lay in a corner, with a label attached to the breast. It was evidently one of the humblest citizens, and the address was 'Rue St. Antoine.' Honour to whom it was due! The Hampdens who saved Paris, and probably all France, from the paternal ordonnances of his Most Christian Majesty, were the canaille of St. Antoine, St. Denis, and St. Martin—men whom the chivalrous Sir Walter Scott would term the 'brutal populace of a great town.' His 'high-born and high-bred' warriors never achieved a victory more beneficial to mankind. The freedom not only of France, but of all the Continent, was weighed in the balance against despotism, and prevailed by the efforts of soiled and swarthy artisans."—*Letter from Paris, in the Spectator.*

THAT fisherman they talk of,—Massaniello,—
Was clearly, by his birth, a sorry fellow,
One of the raffs we shrink from in the street,
Wore an old hat, and went with naked feet;
Which made him fancy, the vain dog! he knew
More truths of poverty than I or you;
Felt more for people's wrongs; and loath'd to see 'em,
For pure starvation, forc'd to sing *Te Deum.*
[For all reform is vanity or will;
A modest man damns freedom, and sits still.]

So up this foppish Fisherman arose,
Got the poor fed, and help'd himself to *cloès,*
And brought such wondering gallants to the block,
That writers for a court still feel the shock.
I cannot mention him myself, I own,
Nor paint the dread plebeian on his throne,
But fear must pelt his memory with a stone.

But mark, ye vain reformers, and beware;
Sore ills beset this new Dictator's chair:
Sore ills, and sore disputes; conspiring lords,
Fear to do wrong, daggers, and bowls, and cords;
Till vex'd, and finding what a task he had,
And losing his nights' rest, the man went mad!

The people's head went mad! So dire a thing
It is, in men, to imitate a King!
Well,—being mad, of course he laid about him,
Till friends, like foes, were glad to do without him;
They kill'd him; kick'd his body, which was funny;
And lords, from out of windows, threw them money.
So much for shoeless, hatless *Massaniello*,
Meaning "Tom Lamb!" "*Tom Lamb!!*" Think of
the fellow!!!

On t'other hand, commend me to the ease
And noble bearing of the Duke of Guise!
High-born and hot, respectable of course,
And one that sat most gracefully his horse.
So great a soul was Guise, that "When," said he,
"God makes a person of my quality,
He stamps a something on him, 'twixt the eyes,
At which the heart within a tradesman dies."
[Reader, if this be hard to understand,
Vide some Duke,—for instance, Cumberland.]
This Duke, so proper to direct the poor,
Not getting to be master, curst and swore,
Kick'd the French flag, blasphem'd till he was hoarse,
And utter'd things (I'm loth to say it) coarse.
Something of this might possibly be true;
'Tis awful to reflect what rage can do;
But I suspect, that much of it was merely
A mode of venting his high mind sincerely;
Pure, sprightly oaths, and gentlemanly fire;
At least, th' accuser is a "vulgar friar."
I grant the Duke of Guise thought no great things
Of a few stabs, and petty poisonings:
'Tis curious, now-a-days, when people scout 'em,
To see how quietly he talks about 'em:
But these were peccadilloes in those times,
Freaks of high birth, expediencies, no crimes:
Not like the vices of a low-born rabble,
Outcry, and want, and Famine's idiot babble.
Besides, "his situation forc'd" our hero
To be a bit of Bloody-bones and Nero,

A thing in mobs which never can take place;
And then 'twas in the blood of all his race;
And if their son, poor fellow, was no wiser,
The reason was, "he wanted an adviser."

In short, give me, for a display of force,
A high-born, hacking blade upon a horse;
Who pummels the base many, that pretend
God made their skulls to any other end;
Not a low humanist, without a sou,
Who reads disgusting lessons to the few.

DOCTOR BAN;

OR,

QUESTION FOR QUESTION.

TERROR's and wrath's brave champion, Doctor Ban,
Scorning us holders to the loving plan,
Asks if we "take God for a gentleman?"

The scandal of the question match who can!
God's not, we own, to be defined by man;
But why must he resemble Doctor Ban?

Sonnets.

QUIET EVENINGS.

TO THOMAS BARNES, ESQ.

WRITTEN FROM HAMPSTEAD.

Dear Barnes, whose native taste, solid and clear,
The throng of life has strengthen'd without harm,
You know the rural feeling, and the charm
That stillness has for a world-fretted ear:
'Tis now deep whispering all about me here
With thousand tiny hushings, like a swarm
Of atom bees, or fairies in alarm,
Or noise of numerous bliss from distant sphere.

This charm our evening hours duly restore,—
Nought heard through all our little, lull'd abode,
Save the crisp fire, or leaf of book turn'd o'er,
Or watch-dog, or the ring of frosty road.
Wants there no other sound, then?—yes, one more,—
The voice of friendly visiting, long owed.

TO HAMPSTEAD.

WRITTEN DURING THE AUTHOR'S IMPRISONMENT,
August, 1813.

Sweet upland, to whose walks, with fond repair,
Out of thy western slope I took my rise
Day after day, and on these feverish eyes
Met the moist fingers of the bathing air;—
If health, unearn'd of thee, I may not share,

Keep it, I pray thee, where my memory lies,
In thy green lanes, brown dells, and breezy skies,
Till I return, and find thee doubly fair.

Wait then my coming, on that lightsome land,
Health, and the joy that out of nature springs,
And Freedom's air-blown locks;—but stay with me,
Friendship, frank entering with the cordial hand,
And Honour, and the Muse with growing wings,
And Love Domestic, smiling equably.

TO THE SAME.

AT THE SAME PERIOD, NOVEMBER, 1814.

Winter has reach'd thee once again at last,
And now the rambler, whom thy groves yet please,
Feels on his house-warm lips the thin air freeze,
While in his shrugging neck the resolute blast
Comes edging; and the leaves, in heaps down cast,
He shuffles with his hastening foot, and sees
The cold sky whitening through the wiry trees,
And sighs to think his loitering noons have pass'd.

And do I love thee less, to paint thee so?
No. This the season is of beauty still,
Doubled at heart; of smoke, with whirling glee
Uptumbling ever from the blaze below,
And home remember'd most,—and oh, lov'd hill,
The second, and the last, away from thee.

TO THE SAME.

DURING THE SAME PERIOD, AUGUST, 1814.

They tell me, when my tongue grows warm on thee,
Dear gentle hill, with tresses green and bright,
That thou art wanting in the finishing sight

Freshest of all for summer eyes to see ;—
That whatsoe'er thy charm of tower and tree,
Of dell wrapp'd in, or airy-viewing height,
No water looks from out thy face with light,
Or waits upon thy walks refreshfully.

It may be so, despite of pond or brook :—
Yet not to me so full of all that's fair.
Though frail-embower'd, with fingering sun between,
Were the divinest fount in Fancy's nook,
In which the nymphs sit tying up their hair,
Their white backs glistening through the myrtles green.

TO THE SAME.

IN THE SPRING THAT SUCCEEDED IMPRISONMENT, MAY, 1815.

THE baffled spell that bound me is undone,
And I have breathed once more beneath thy sky,
Lovely-brow'd Hampstead ; and my looks have run,
O'er and about thee : and had scarce drawn nigh,
When I beheld, in momentary sun,
One of thy hills gleam bright and bosomy,
Just like that orb of orbs, a human one,
Let forth by chance upon a lover's eye.

Forgive me then, that not till now I spoke ;
For all the comforts, miss'd in close distress,
With airy nod came up from every part,
O'er-smiling speech : and so I gazed, and took
A long, deep draught of silent freshfulness,
Ample, and gushing round my feeble heart.

TO THE SAME.

IN THE SAME MONTH—SAME YEAR.

As one who after long and far-spent years
Comes on his mistress in an hour of sleep,
And wond'ring half that he can silence keep,

Stands smiling o'er her through a flash of tears,
To see how sweet and self-same she appears;
Till at his touch, with little moving creep
Of joy, she wakes from out her calmness deep,
And then his heart finds voice, and dances round her ears:—

So I, first coming on my haunts again,
In pause and stillness of the early prime,
Stood thinking of the past and present time
With earnest eyesight, scarcely cross'd with pain;
Till the fresh-moving leaves, and startling birds,
Loosen'd my long-suspended breath in words.

THE NILE.[130]

It flows through old hush'd Ægypt and its sands,
Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream,
And times and things, as in that vision, seem
Keeping along it their eternal stands,—
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands
That roamed through the young world, the glory extreme
Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,
The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands.

Then comes a mightier silence, stern and strong,
As of a world left empty of its throng,
And the void weighs on us; and then we wake,
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along
'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take
Our own calm journey on for human sake.

TO THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE CRICKET.[131]

Green little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June,
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon,
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class

With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass;

Oh sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine; both, though small, are strong
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth
To ring in thoughtful ears this natural song—
In doors and out, summer and winter, Mirth.

DECEMBER 30th, 1816.

TO HENRY ROBERTSON, JOHN GATTIE, AND VINCENT NOVELLO,

NOT KEEPING THEIR APPOINTED HOUR.

HARRY, my friend, who full of tasteful glee,
Have music all about you, heart and lips;
And, John, whose voice is like a rill that slips
Over the sunny pebbles breathingly;
And, Vincent, you, who with like mastery
Can chase the notes with fluttering finger-tips,
Like fairies down a hill hurrying their trips,
Or sway the organ with firm royalty;

Why stop ye on the road? The day, 'tis true,
Shows us as in a diamond all things clear,
And makes the hill-surmounting eye rejoice,
Doubling the earthly green, the heavenly blue;
But come, complete the charm of such a sphere,
And give the beauty of the day a voice.

TO THOMAS STOTHARD, R.A.

THY fancy lives in a delightful sphere,
Stothard,—fit haunt for spirit so benign;
For never since those southern masters fine,
Whose pictured shapes like their own souls appear

Reflected many a way in waters clear,
Has the true woman's gentle mien divine
Looked so, as in those breathing heads of thine,
With parted locks, and simple cheek sincere.

Therefore, against our climate's chilly hold,
Thou hast a nest in sunny glades and bowers;
And there, about thee, never growing old,
Are these fair things, clear as the lily flowers,
Such as great Petrarch loved,—only less cold,
More truly virtuous, and of gladdening powers.

TO MY WIFE.

ON MODELLING MY BUST.

Ah, Marian mine, the face you look on now
Is not exactly like my wedding-day's:
Sunk is its cheek, deeper-retired its gaze,
Less white and smooth its temple-flattened brow.
Sorrow has been there with his silent plough,
And strait, stern hand. No matter, if it raise
Aught that affection fancies, it may praise,
Or make me worthier than Apollo's bough.

Loss, after all,—such loss especially,—
Is transfer, change, but not extinction,—no;
Part in our children's apple cheeks I see;
And, for the rest, while you look at me so,
Take care you do not smile it back to me,
And miss the copied furrows as you go.

TO KOSCIUSKO,

WHO NEVER FOUGHT EITHER FOR BONAPARTE OR THE ALLIES.

'Tis like thy patient valour thus to keep,
Great Kosciusko, to the rural shade,
While Freedom's ill-found amulet still is made
Pretence for old aggression, and a heap
Of selfish mockeries. There, as in the sweep

Of stormier fields, thou earnest with thy blade,
Transform'd, not inly alter'd, to the spade,
Thy never yielding right to a calm sleep.

There came a wanderer, borne from land to land
Upon a couch, pale, many-wounded, mild,
His brow with patient pain dulcetly sour.
Men stoop'd with awful sweetness on his hand,
And kiss'd it; and collected Virtue smiled,
To think how sovereign her enduring hour.[132]

ON A LOCK OF MILTON'S HAIR.

It lies before me there, and my own breath
Stirs its thin outer threads, as though beside
The living head I stood in honour'd pride,
Talking of lovely things that conquer death.
Perhaps he press'd it once, or underneath
Ran his fine fingers, when he leant, blank-eyed,
And saw, in fancy, Adam and his bride
With their rich locks, or his own Delphic wreath.

There seems a love in hair, though it be dead.
It is the gentlest, yet the strongest thread
Of our frail plant,—a blossom from the tree
Surviving the proud trunk;—as though it said
Patience and Gentleness is Power. In me
Behold affectionate eternity.

TO PERCY SHELLEY,

ON THE DEGRADING NOTIONS OF DEITY.

What wonder, Percy, that with jealous rage
Men should defame the kindly and the wise,
When in the midst of the all-beauteous skies,
And all this lovely world, that should engage
Their mutual search for the old golden age,

They seat a phantom, swelled into grim size
Out of their own passions and bigotries,
And then, for fear, proclaim it meek and sage!

And this they call a light and a revealing!
Wise as the clown, who plodding home at night
In autumn, turns at call of fancied elf,
And sees upon the fog, with ghastly feeling,
A giant shadow in its imminent might,
Which his own lanthorn throws up from himself.

TO MISS K.

WRITTEN ON A PIECE OF PAPER WHICH HAPPENED TO BE HEADED WITH A LONG LIST OF TREES.

THERE, Bess, your namesake held not sceptred hand
Under a canopy, so full and bright,
Not even that which Spenser hung with light,
And little shouldering angels made expand,
When she sat arbitress of fairy-land.
Fancy a sun o'er head, to make the sight
Warm outwards, and a bank with daisies white,
And you're a rural queen, finished and fanned.

And now what sylvan homage would it please
Your Leafyship to have? bracelets of berries,
Feathers of jays, or tassels made of cherries,
Strawberries and milk, or pippins crisp to squeeze?
No, says your smile,—but two things richer far,
A verse, and a staunch friend;—and here they are.

TO THE AUTHOR OF "ION."

I.

I COULD not come to shed a man's rare tears
With those who honour'd, and who lov'd, thy play;
My heart said "yes," but the sick room said "nay,"
And the good doctor with his earnest fears.
Yet I was with thee,—saw thine high compeers,

Wordsworth and Landor,—saw the piled array,
The many-visag'd heart, looking one way,
Come to drink beauteous truth at eyes and ears.

Now said I to myself,—The scenes arise;
Now comes the sweet of name,[133] whom great Love sunders
From love itself; now, now he gives the skies
The heart *they* gave (sweet thought 'gainst bitter wonders!)
And ever and aye, hands, stung with tear-thrilled eyes,
Snapping the silence, burst in crashing thunders.

II.

Yes, I beheld the old accustom'd sight,
Pit, boxes, galleries; I was at "the play;"
I saw uprise the stage's strange floor-day,
And music tuning as in tune's despite;
Childhood I saw, glad-faced, that squeezeth tight
One's hand, while the rapt curtain soars away,—
And beauty and age, and all that piled array—
Thousands of souls drawn to one wise delight.

A noble spectacle!—Noble in mirth—
Nobler in sacred fellowship of tears!
I've often asked myself what sight on earth
Is worth the fancying of our fellow spheres;
And this is one—whole hosts in love with worth,
Judging the shapes of their own hopes and fears.

III.

Fine age is ours, and marvellous—setting free
Hopes that were bending into gray despairs,
Winnowing iron like chaff, outspeeding the airs,
Conquering with smoky flag the winds at sea,
Flinging from thund'rous wheels, immeasurably,
Knowledge like daily light: so that man stares,
Planet-struck with his work-day world, nor dares
Repeat the old babble of what "shall never be."

A great good age!—Greatest and best in this,—
That it strikes dumb the old anti-creeds, which parted

Man from the child—prosperity from the bliss
Of faith in good—and toil of wealth unthwarted
From leisure crown'd with bay, such as thine is,
Talfourd! a lawyer prosperous and young-hearted.

TO CHARLES DICKENS.

As when a friend (himself in music's list)
Stands by some rare, full-handed organist,
And glorying as he sees the master roll
The surging sweets through all their depths of soul,
Cannot, encouraged by his smile, forbear
With his own hand to join them here and there;
And so, if little, yet add something more
To the sound's volume and the golden roar;
So I, dear friend, Charles Dickens, though thy hand
Needs but itself, to charm from land to land,
Make bold to join in summoning men's ears
To this thy new-found music of our spheres,
In hopes that by thy Household Words and thee
The world may haste to days of harmony.

TO POERIO AND HIS FELLOW-PATRIOTS.

O NOBLE souls, freed from the foulest spite
That ever tyrannous and heartless fool
Wreak'd on the worth that shamed his worthless rule,
Linking your very bodies, day and night,
With lower souls, in hopes your patient might
Would droop despairing, as by Stygian pool;
(But you, oh you, masters in sorrow's school,
Lifted the heart-touch'd lowness to your height);—

Oh resting now, where men can trust a throne,
And served with such deep honour as endures
Beyond all gauds (for in comparison
With years of conquest over woes like yours,

Glory, the Frenchman's feather, may be spurn'd)
Live long the new-found life your great good hearts have
earn'd.

THE FISH, THE MAN, AND THE SPIRIT.

TO FISH.

You strange, astonish'd-looking, angle-faced,
Dreary-mouth'd, gaping wretches of the sea,
Gulping salt-water everlastingly,
Cold-blooded, though with red your blood be graced,
And mute, though dwellers in the roaring waste;
And you, all shapes beside, that fishy be,—
Some round, some flat, some long, all devilry,
Legless, unloving, infamously chaste:—

O scaly, slippery, wet, swift, staring wights,
What is't ye do? what life lead? eh, dull goggles?
How do ye vary your vile days and nights?
How pass your Sundays? Are ye still but joggles
In ceaseless wash? Still nought but gapes and bites,
And drinks, and stares, diversified with boggles?

A FISH ANSWERS.

Amazing monster! that, for aught I know,
With the first sight of thee didst make our race
Forever stare! O flat and shocking face,
Grimly divided from the breast below!
Thou that on dry land horribly dost go
With a split body and most ridiculous pace,
Prong after prong, disgracer of all grace,
Long-useless-finned, hair'd, upright, unwet, slow!

O breather of unbreathable, sword-sharp air,
How canst exist? How bear thyself, thou dry
And dreary sloth. What particle canst share
Of the only blessed life, the watery?
I sometimes see of ye an actual *pair*
Go by! link'd fin by fin! most odiously.

The Fish turns into a Man, and then into a Spirit, and again speaks.

Indulge thy smiling scorn, if smiling still,
O man! and loathe, but with a sort of love:
For difference must its use by difference prove,
And, in sweet clang, the spheres with music fill.
One of the spirits am I, that at his will
Live in whate'er has life—fish, eagle, dove—
No hate, no pride, beneath nought, nor above,
A visitor of the rounds of God's sweet skill.

Man's life is warm, glad, sad, 'twixt loves and graves,
Boundless in hope, honour'd with pangs austere,
Heaven-gazing; and his angel-wings he craves:
The fish is swift, small-needing, vague yet clear,
A cold, sweet, silver life, wrapp'd in round waves,
Quicken'd with touches of transporting fear.

THE DEFORMED CHILD.

BY VINCENT LEIGH HUNT.

[VINCENT LEIGH HUNT was the youngest son of Leigh Hunt, and died when quite young. In a letter to the editor of an American edition of his Poetical Works, Mr. Hunt thus spoke of him: "His whole life was full of sympathy. A sonnet like this will allow his father to indulge a hope, that wherever any Sonnets of his own may be thought worth collecting, they and it may never be parted."—EDITOR.]

AN Angel prisoned in an infant frame
Of mortal sickness and deformity,
Looks patiently from out that languid eye
Matured, and seeming large with pain. The name
Of "happy childhood" mocks his movements tame,
So propp'd with piteous crutch, or forced to lie
Rather than sit, in his frail chair, and try
To taste the pleasure of the unshared game.

He does; and faintly claps his withered hands
To see how brother Willie caught the ball;
Kind brother Willie, strong, yet gentle all:
'Twas he that placed him where his chair now stands
In that warm corner 'gainst the sunny wall—
God, in that brother, gave him more than lands.

Blank Verse.

PAGANINI.

A FRAGMENT.

* * * * * * *

So play'd of late to every passing thought
With finest change (might I but half as well
So write !) the pale magician of the bow,
Who brought from Italy the tales, made true,
Of Grecian lyres; and on his sphery hand,
Loading the air with dumb expectancy,
Suspended, ere it fell, a nation's breath.

He smote,—and clinging to the serious chords
With godlike ravishment, drew forth a breath,
So deep, so strong, so fervid thick with love,
Blissful, yet laden as with twenty prayers,
That Juno yearn'd with no diviner soul
To the first burthen of the lips of Jove.

The exceeding mystery of the loveliness
Sadden'd delight; and with his mournful look,
Dreary and gaunt, hanging his pallid face
'Twixt his dark flowing locks, he almost seem'd,
To feeble or to melancholy eyes,
One that had parted with his soul for pride,
And in the sable secret liv'd forlorn.

But true and earnest, all too happily
That skill dwelt in him, serious with its joy;
For noble now he smote the exulting strings,
And bade them march before his stately will;

And now he lov'd them like a cheek, and laid
Endearment on them, and took pity sweet;
And now he was all mirth, or all for sense
And reason, carving out his thoughts like prose
After his poetry; or else he laid
His own soul prostrate at the feet of love,
And with a full and trembling fervour deep,
In kneeling and close-creeping urgency,
Implor'd some mistress with hot tears; which past,
And after patience had brought right of peace,
He drew, as if from thoughts finer than hope,
Comfort around him in ear-soothing strains
And elegant composure; or he turn'd
To heaven instead of earth, and rais'd a pray'r
So earnest vehement, yet so lowly sad,
Mighty with want and all poor human tears,
That never saint, wrestling with earthly love,
And in mid-age unable to get free,
Tore down from heav'n such pity. Or behold,
In his despair, (for such, from what he spoke
Of grief before it, or of love, 'twould seem,)
Jump would he into some strange wail uncouth
Of witches' dance, ghastly with whinings thin
And palsied nods—mirth wicked, sad, and weak,
And then with show of skill mechanical,
Marvellous as witchcraft, he would overthrow
That vision with a show'r of notes like hail,
Or sudden mixtures of all difficult things
Never yet heard; flashing the sharp tones now,
In downward leaps like swords; now rising fine
Into some utmost tip of minute sound,
From whence he stepp'd into a higher and higher
On viewless points, till laugh took leave of him:
Or he would fly as if from all the world
To be alone and happy, and you should hear
His instrument become a tree far off,
A nest of birds and sunbeams, sparkling both,
A cottage-bow'r: or he would condescend,
In playful wisdom which knows no contempt,
To bring to laughing memory, plain as sight,

A farm-yard with its inmates, ox and lamb,
The whistle and the whip, with feeding hens
In household fidget muttering evermore,
And, rising as in scorn, crown'd Chanticleer,
Ordaining silence with his sovereign crow.
Then from one chord of his amazing shell
Would he fetch out the voice of choirs, and weight
Of the built organ ; or some twofold strain
Moving before him in sweet-going yoke,
Ride like an Eastern conqueror, round whose state
Some light Morisco leaps with his guitar ;
And ever and anon o'er these he'd throw
Jets of small notes like pearl, or like the pelt
Of lovers' sweetmeats on Italian lutes
From windows on a feast-day, or the leaps
Of pebbled water, sprinkled in the sun,
One chord affecting all :—and when the ear
Felt there was nothing present but himself
And silence, and the wonder drew deep sighs,
Then would his bow lie down again in tears,
And speak to some one in a pray'r of love,
Endless, and never from his heart to go :
Or he would talk as of some secret bliss,
And at the close of all the wonderment
(Which himself shar'd) near and more near would come
Into the inmost ear, and whisper there
Breathings so soft, so low, so full of life,
Touch'd beyond sense, and only to be borne
By pauses which made each less bearable,
That out of pure necessity for relief
From that heap'd joy, and bliss that laugh'd for pain,
The thunder of th' uprolling house came down,
And bow'd the breathing sorcerer into smiles.

OUR COTTAGE.

Some few of us, children and grown, possess
A cottage, far remov'd. 'Tis in a glade,
Where the sun harbours ; and one side of it

Listens to bees, another to a brook.
Lovers, that have just parted for the night,
Dream of such spots, when they have said their pray'rs,—
Or some tir'd parent, holding by the hand
A child, and walking tow'rds the setting sun.

No news comes here; no scandal; no routine
Of morning visit; not a postman's knock,—
That double thrust of the long staff of care.
We are as distant from the world, in spirit
If not in place, as though in Crusoe's isle,
And please ourselves with being ignorant
Ev'n of the country some five miles beyond.
Our wood's our world, with some few hills and dales,
And many an alley green, with poppies edg'd
And flowery brakes, where sails the long blue fly,
Whom we pronounce a fairy; and 'twould go
Hard with us to be certain he's not one,
Such willing children are we of the possible.
Hence all our walks have names; some of the Fairies,
And some of Nymphs, (where the brook makes a bath
In a green chamber, and the turf's half violets,)
And some of Grim Old Men that live alone,
And may not be seen safely. Pan has one
Down in a beech-dell; and Apollo another,
Where sunset in the trees makes strawy fires.

You might suppose the place pick'd out of books.
The nightingales, in the cold blooms, are there
Fullest of heart, hushing our open'd windows;
The cuckoo ripest in the warmed thicks.
Autumn, the princely season, purple-rob'd
And liberal-handed, brings no gloom to us,
But, rich in its own self, gives us rich hope
Of winter-time; and when the winter comes,
We burn old wood, and read old books that wall
Our biggest room, and take our heartiest walks
On the good, hard, glad ground; or when it rains
And the rich dells are mire, make much and long
Of a small bin we have of good old wine;

And talk of, perhaps entertain, some friend,
Whom, old or young, we gift with the same grace
Of ancient epithet; for love is time
With us; youth old as love, and age as young;
And stars, affections, hopes, roll all alike
Immortal rounds, in heaven when not on earth.
Therefore the very youngest of us all
Do we call old,—"old Vincent," or "old Jule,"
Or "old Jacintha;" and they count us young,
And at a very playfellow time of life,
As in good truth we are: witness the nuts
We seek, to pelt with, in thy trampled leaves,
November; and the merry Christmas ring,
Hot-fac'd and loud with too much fire and food,—
The rare excess, loving the generous gods.
"Old Mary," and "old Percy," and "old Henry,"
Also there are, with more beyond their teens;
But these are reverend youngsters, married now,
And ride no longer to our cottage nest
On that unbridled horse, their father's knee.

Custom itself is an old friend with us;
Though change we make a friend, too, if it come
To better custom: nay, to bury him,
Provided soul be gone, and it be done
Rev'rently and kindly; and we then install
His son, or set a new one in his place;
For all good honest customs, from all lands,
Find welcome here,—seats built up in old elms
From France; and evening dances on the green;
And servants (home's inhabiting strangers) turn'd
To zealous friends; and gipsy meals, whose smoke
Warms houseless glades; and the good bout Chinese
At pen and ink, in rhyming summer bow'rs,
Temper'd with pleasant penalties of wine.
The villagers love us; and on Sabbath-days,
(Such luck is ours, and round harmonious life)
In an old, ivied church (which God preserve,
And make a mark forever of the love
That by mild acquiescence bears all change

And keeps all better'd good!) no priest like ours
Utters such Christian lore, so final sweet,
So fit for audience in those flowery dells.
Not a young heart feels strange, nor old misgives:
You scarcely can help thinking, that the sound
Must pierce with sweetness to the very graves.

But mark—not the whole week do we pass thus,—
No, nor whole day. Heaven, for ease' sake forbid!
Half of the day (and half of that might serve,
Were all the world active and just as we)
Is mix'd with the great throng, playing its part
Of toil and pain; we could not relish else
Our absolute comfort; nay, should almost fear
Heav'n counted us not worthy to partake
The common load with its great hopes for all,
But held us flimsy triflers—gnats i' the sun—
Made but for play, and so to die, unheav'n'd.
Oh, hard we work, and carefully we think,
And much we suffer! but the line being drawn
'Twixt work and our earth's heav'n, well do we draw it,
Sudden, and sharp, and sweet; and in an instant
Are borne away, like knights to fairy isles,
And close our gates behind us on the world.

"And where (cries some one) is this blessed spot?
May I behold it? May I gain admittance?"

Yes, *with a thought;—as we do.*
"Woe is me!
Then no such place exists!"
None such to us,
Except in thought; but *that*—
"Is true as fiction?"

Ay, true as tears or smiles that fiction makes,
Waking the ready heaven in men's eyes;—
True as effect to cause;—true as the hours
You spend in joy while sitting at a play.

Is there no truth in those? Or was your heart
Happier before you went there? Oh, if rich
In what you deem life's only solid goods,
Think what unjoyous blanks ev'n those would be,
Were fancy's light smitten from out your world,
With all its colourings of your prides, your gains,
Your very toys and tea-cups, nothing left
But what *you* touch, and not what *touches you.*
The wise are often rich in little else,
The rich, if wise, count it their gold of gold.
Say, is it not so, thou who art both rich
In the world's eye, and wise in solitude's,—
Stoneleigh's poetic lord, whose gentle name
No echo granted at the font to mine,
I trust, shall have made ruder. What would'st care,
O Leigh, for all the wooden matter-o'-fact
Of all thine oaks, depriv'd of what thy muse
Can do to wake their old oracular breath,
Or whisper, with their patriarch locks, of heaven?
Lo! Southwood Smith, physician of mankind,
Bringer of light and air to the rich poor
Of the next age:—he, when in real woods
He rests the mildest energy alive,
Scorns not these fancied ones, but hails and loves
A vision of the dawn of his own world.
Horace Smith, lo! rare compound, skill'd alike
In worldly gain and its unworldliest use:
He prospers in the throng, makes fact his slave,
Then leads a life with fiction and good deeds.
Lo! Bulwer, genius in the thick of fame,
With smiles of thrones, and echoes from the Rhine,
He too extends his grounds to Fairy-land,
And while his neighbours think they see him looking
Hard at themselves, is in Armorica,
Feasting with lovers in enchanted bowers.
Lo! Jeffrey the fine wit, the judge revered,
The man belov'd, what spirit invokes he
To make his hasty moments of repose
Richest and farthest off?—The Muse of Keats,
One of the inmost dwellers in the core

Of the old woods, when Nymphs and Graces liv'd,—
Where still they live, to eyes, like theirs, divine.

Fancy's the wealth of wealth, the toiler's hope,
The poor man's piecer-out; the art of Nature,
Painting her landscapes twice; the spirit of fact,
As matter is the body; the pure gift
Of heav'n to poet and to child; which he
Who retains most in manhood, being a man
In all things fitted else, is most a man;
Because he wants no human faculty,
Nor loses one sweet taste of the sweet world.

A HEAVEN UPON EARTH.

FRAGMENT OF AN UNPUBLISHED PLAY. A HUSBAND IS CONVERSING WITH HIS WIFE.

For there are two heavens, sweet,
Both made of love,—one, inconceivable
Ev'n by the other, so divine it is;
The other, far on *this* side of the stars,
By men call'd *home*, when some blest pair are met
As we are now: sometimes in happy talk,
Sometimes in silence (also a sort of talk,
Where friends are match'd) each at its gentle task
Of book, or household need, or meditation,
By summer-moon, or curtain'd fire in frost;
And by degrees there come,—not always come,
Yet mostly,—other, smaller inmates there,
Cherubic-fac'd, yet growing like those two,
Their pride and playmates, not without meek fear,
Since God sometimes to his own cherubim
Takes those sweet cheeks of earth. And so 'twixt joy,
And love, and tears, and whatsoever pain
Man fitly shares with man, these two grow old;
And if indeed blest thoroughly, they die
In the same spot, and nigh the same good hour,
And setting suns look heavenly on their grave.—

REFLECTIONS OF A DEAD BODY.

SCENE.—*A female sitting by a bed-side, anxiously looking at the face of her husband, just dead. The soul within the dead body soliloquizes.*

WHAT change is this! What joy! What depth of rest!
What suddenness of withdrawal from all pain
Into all bliss? into a balm so perfect
I do not even smile! I tried but now,
With that breath's end, to speak to the dear face
That watches me—and lo! all in an instant,
Instead of toil, and a weak, weltering tear,
I am all peace, all happiness, all power,
Laid on some throne in space.—Great God! I am dead.
(*A pause.*) Dear God! thy love is perfect; thy truth known.
(*Another.*) And he,—and they!—How simple and strange! How beautiful!
But I may whisper it not,—even to thought;
Lest strong imagination, hearing it,
Speak, and the world be shatter'd.
(*Soul again pauses.*) O balm! O bliss! O saturating smile
Unsmiling! O doubt ended! certainty
Begun! O will, faultless, yet all indulged,
Encourag'd to be wilful;—to delay
Even its wings for heav'n; and thus to rest
Here, here, ev'n here,—'twixt heav'n and earth awhile,
A bed in the morn of endless happiness.

I feel warm drops falling upon my face:
They reach me through the rapture of this cold.—
My wife! my love!—'tis for the best thou canst not
Know how I know thee weeping, and how fond
A kiss meets thine in these unowning lips.
Ah, truly was my love what thou didst hope it,
And more; and so was thine—I read it all—
And our small feuds were but impatiences
At seeing the dear truth ill understood.
Poor sweet! thou blamest now thyself, and heapest
Memory on memory of imagin'd wrong,
As I should have done too,—as all who love;

And yet I cannot pity thee :—so well
I know the end, and how thou'lt smile hereafter.

She speaks my name at last, as though she fear'd
The terrible, familiar sound ; and sinks
In sobs upon my bosom. Hold me fast,
Hold me fast, sweet, and from the extreme grow calm,—
Me, cruelly unmov'd, and yet how loving !

How wrong I was to quarrel with poor James !
And how dear Francis mistook *me !* That pride,
How without ground it was ! Those arguments,
Which I suppos'd so final, oh how foolish !
Yet gentlest death will not permit rebuke,
Ev'n of one's self. They'll know all, as I know,
When they lie thus.
Colder I grow, and happier.
Warmness and sense are drawing to a point,
Ere they depart ;—myself quitting myself.
The soul gathers its wings upon the edge
Of the new world, yet how assuredly !
Oh ! how in balm I change ! actively will'd,
Yet passive, quite ; and feeling opposites mingle
In exquisitest peace !—Those fleshly clothes,
Which late I thought myself, lie more and more
Apart from this warm, sweet, retreating me,
Who am as a hand withdrawing from a glove.

So lay my mother : so my father : so
My children : yet I pitied them. I wept,
And fancied them in graves, and call'd them "poor !"

O graves ! O tears ! O knowledge, will, and time,
And fear, and hope ! what petty terms of earth
Were ye ! yet how I love ye as of earth,
The planet's household words ; and how postpone,
Till out of these dear arms, th' immeasurable
Tongue of the all-possessing smile eternal !
Ah, not excluding these, nor aught that's past,
Nor aught that's present, nor that's yet to come,
Well waited for. I would not stir a finger

Out of this rest, to reassure all anguish;
Such warrant hath it; such divine conjuncture;
Such a charm binds it with the needs of bliss.

That was my eldest boy's—that kiss. And that
The baby with its little unweening mouth;
And those—and those—Dear hearts! they have all come,
And think me dead—me, who so know I'm living,
The vitalest creature in this fleshly room.
I part; and with my spirit's eyes, full open'd,
Will look upon them.

[*Spirit parts from the body, and breathes upon their eyes.*

Patient be those tears,
Fresh heart-dews, standing on these dear clay-moulds
Of souls made of myself,—made of us both
In the half-heavenly time. I quit ye but
To meet again, and will revisit soon
In many a dream, and many a gentle sigh.

[*Spirit looks at the body.*

And was that me?—that hollow-cheek'd pale thing,
Shatter'd with passions, worn with cares; now placid
With my divine departure? And must love
Think of thee painfully? of stifling boards
'Gainst the free face, and of the irreverent worm?
To dust with thee, poor corpse! to dust and grass,
And the glad innocent worm, that does its duty
As thou dost thine in changing. I thy life,
Life of thy life, bird of the bird, ah ha!
Turn my face forth to heav'n—ah ha! ah ah!
Oh the infinitude and the eternity!
The dimpled air! the measureless conscious heaven!
The endless possession! the sweet, mad, fawning planets

[*It speaks with a hurried vehemence of rapture.*

Sleeking, like necks, round the beatitudes of the ubiquitous sun-god
With bee-music of innumerable organ thunders.
And the travelling crowds this way, like a life-tempest,
With rapid angelical faces, two in one,
Ah ah! ah ha! and the stillness beyond the stars—
My Friend! my Mother!—I mingle through the roar.

[*Spirit vanishes.*

Miscellaneous Poems.

POWER AND GENTLENESS.

1817.

I've thought at gentle and ungentle hour,
Of many an act and giant shape of power;
Of the old kings with high exacting looks,
Sceptred and globed; of eagles on their rocks,
With straining feet, and that fierce mouth and drear,
Answering the strain with downward drag austere;
Of the rich-headed lion, whose huge frown
All his great nature, gathering, seems to crown;
Of towers on hills, with foreheads out of sight
In clouds, or shown us by the thunder's light,
Or ghastly prison, that eternally
Holds its blind visage out to the lone sea;
And of all sunless, subterranean deeps
The creature makes, who listens while he sleeps,
Avarice; and then of those old earthly cones,
That stride, they say, over heroic bones;
And those stone heaps Egyptian, whose small doors
Look like low dens under precipitous shores;
And him, great Memnon, that long sitting by
In seeming idleness, with stony eye,
Sang at the morning's touch, like poetry;
And then, of all the fierce and bitter fruit
Of the proud planting of a tyrannous foot,—
Of bruised rights, and flourishing bad men,
And virtue wasting heavenwards from a den;
Brute force and fury; and the devilish drouth
Of the fool cannon's ever-gaping mouth;
And the bride-widowing sword; and the harsh bray
The sneering trumpet sends across the fray;

And all which lights the people-thinning star,
That selfishness invokes,—the horsed war,
Panting along with many a bloody mane.

I've thought of all this pride, and all this pain,
And all the insolent plenitudes of power,
And I declare, by this most quiet hour,
Which holds in different tasks by the fire-light
Me and my friends here, this delightful night,
That Power itself has not one half the might
Of Gentleness. 'Tis want to all true wealth;
The uneasy madman's force, to the wise health;
Blind downward beating, to the eyes that see;
Noise to persuasion, doubt to certainty;
The consciousness of strength in enemies,
Who must be strain'd upon, or else they rise;
The battle to the moon, who all the while,
High out of hearing, passes with her smile;
The tempest, trampling in his scanty run,
To the whole globe, that basks about the sun;
Or as all shrieks and clangs, with which a sphere,
Undone and fired, could rake the midnight ear,
Compared with that vast dumbness nature keeps
Throughout her starry deeps,
Most old, and mild, and awful, and unbroken,
Which tells a tale of peace beyond whate'er was spoken.

THOUGHTS OF THE AVON.

ON THE 28TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1817.

It is the loveliest day that we have had
This lovely month, sparkling and full of cheer;
The sun has a sharp eye, yet kind and glad;
Colours are doubly bright: all things appear
Strong outlined in the spacious atmosphere;
And through the lofty air the white clouds go,
As on their way to some celestial show.

The banks of Avon must look well to-day;
Autumn is there in all his glory and treasure;
The river must run bright; the ripples play
Their crispest tunes to boats that rock at leisure;
The ladies are abroad with cheeks of pleasure;
And the rich orchards in their sunniest robes
Are pouting thick with all their winy globes.

And why must I be thinking of the pride
Of distant bowers, as if I had no nest
To sing in here, though by the houses' side?
As if I could not in a minute rest
In leafy fields, quiet, and self-possest,
Having, on one side, Hampstead for my looks,
On t'other, London, with its wealth of books?

It is not that I envy autumn there,
Nor the sweet river, though my fields have none;
Nor yet that in its all-productive air
Was born Humanity's divinest son,
That sprightliest, gravest, wisest, kindest one—
Shakespeare; nor yet, oh no—that here I miss
Souls not unworthy to be named with his.

No; but it is, that on this very day,
And upon Shakespeare's stream, a little lower,
Where, drunk with Delphic air, it comes away
Dancing in perfume by the Peary Shore,[134]
Was born the lass that I love more and more:
A fruit as fine as in the Hesperian store,
Smooth, roundly smiling, noble to the core;
An eye for art: a nature, that of yore
Mothers and daughters, wives and sisters wore,
When in the golden age one tune they bore;
Marian,—who makes my heart and very rhymes
run o'er.

TO T. L. H.

SIX YEARS OLD, DURING A SICKNESS.

1817.

Sleep breathes at last from out thee,
My little, patient boy;
And balmy rest about thee
Smooths off the day's annoy.
I sit me down, and think
Of all thy winning ways;
Yet almost wish, with sudden shrink,
That I had less to praise.

Thy sidelong pillowed meekness,
Thy thanks to all that aid,
Thy heart, in pain and weakness,
Of fancied faults afraid;
The little trembling hand
That wipes thy quiet tears,
These, these are things that may demand
Dread memories for years.

Sorrows I've had, severe ones,
I will not think of now;
And calmly 'midst my dear ones
Have wasted with dry brow;
But when thy fingers press
And pat my stooping head,
I cannot bear the gentleness,—
The tears are in their bed.

Ah, first-born of thy mother,
When life and hope were new,
Kind playmate of thy brother,
Thy sister, father too;
My light, where'er I go,
My bird, when prison-bound,
My hand in hand companion,—no,
My prayers shall hold thee round.

To say " He has departed "—
" His voice "—" his face "—is gone ;
To feel impatient-hearted,
Yet feel we must bear on ;
Ah, I could not endure
To whisper of such woe,
Unless I felt this sleep ensure
That it will not be so.

Yes, still he's fixed, and sleeping!
This silence too the while—
Its very hush and creeping
Seem whispering us a smile :
Something divine and dim
Seems going by one's ear,
Like parting wings of Seraphim,
Who say, " We've finished here."

TO J. H.

FOUR YEARS OLD :—A NURSERY SONG.

1816.

. . . . . Pien d' amori,
Pien di canti, e pien di fiori.
FRUGONI.

Full of little loves for ours,
Full of songs, and full of flowers.

Ah little ranting Johnny,
Forever blithe and bonny,
And singing nonny, nonny,
With hat just thrown upon ye ;
Or whistling like the thrushes
With voice in silver gushes ;
Or twisting random posies
With daisies, weeds, and roses ;
And strutting in and out so,
Or dancing all about so,
With cock-up nose so lightsome,
And sidelong eyes so brightsome,

And cheeks as ripe as apples,
And head as rough as Dapple's,
And arms as sunny shining
As if their veins they'd wine in;
And mouth that smiles so truly,
Heav'n seems to have made it newly,
It breaks into such sweetness
With merry-lipp'd completeness;—
Ah Jack, ah Gianni mio,
As blithe as Laughing Trio,
—Sir Richard, too, you rattler,
So christened from the Tatler,—
My Bacchus in his glory,
My little Cor-di-fiori.
My tricksome Puck, my Robin,
Who in and out come bobbing,
As full of feints and frolic as
That fibbing rogue Autolycus,
And play the graceless robber on
Your grave-eyed brother Oberon,—
Ah! Dick, ah Dolce-riso,
How can you, can you be so?

One cannot turn a minute,
But mischief—there you're in it,
A getting at my books, John,
With mighty bustling looks, John;
Or poking at the roses,
In midst of which your nose is;
Or climbing on a table,
No matter how unstable,
And turning up your quaint eye
And half-shut teeth with "Mayn't I?"
Or else you're off at play, John,
Just as you'd be all day, John,
With hat or not, as happens,
And there you dance, and clap hands,
Or on the grass go rolling,
Or plucking flow'rs, or bowling,
And getting me expenses
With losing balls o'er fences;

Or, as the constant trade is,
Are fondled by the ladies
With "What a young rogue this is!"
Reforming him with kisses;
Till suddenly you cry out,
As if you had an eye out,
So desperately tearful,
The sound is really fearful;
When lo! directly after,
It bubbles into laughter.

Ah rogue! and do you know, John,
Why 'tis we love you so, John?
And how it is they let ye
Do what you like and pet ye,
Though all who look upon ye,
Exclaim, "Ah Johnny, Johnny!"
It is because you please 'em
Still more, John, than you tease 'em;
Because, too, when not present,
The thought of you is pleasant;
Because, though such an elf, John,
They think that if yourself, John,
Had something to condemn too,
You'd be as kind to them too;
In short, because you're very
Good-temper'd, Jack, and merry;
And are as quick at giving,
As easy at receiving;
And in the midst of pleasure
Are certain to find leisure
To think, my boy, of ours,
And bring us lumps of flowers.

But see, the sun shines brightly;
Come, put your hat on rightly,
And we'll among the bushes,
And hear your friends the thrushes;
And see what flow'rs the weather
Has render'd fit to gather;

And, when we home must jog, you
Shall ride my back, you rogue you,
Your hat adorn'd with fine leaves,
Horse-chestnut, oak, and vine-leaves;
And so, with green o'erhead, John,
Shall whistle home to bed, John.

TO CHARLES LAMB.

O THOU, whom old Homer would call, were he living,
Home-lover, thought-feeder, abundant-joke-giving;
Whose charity springs from deep knowledge, nor swerves
Into mere self-reflections, or scornful reserves;
In short, who were made for two centuries ago,
When Shakespeare drew men, and to write was to know;—

You'll guess why I can't see the snow-covered streets,
Without thinking of you and your visiting feats,
When you call to remembrance how you and one more,[135]
When I wanted it most,[136] used to knock at my door.
For when the sad winds told us rain would come down,
Or snow upon snow fairly clogged up the town,
And dun yellow fogs brooded over its white,
So that scarcely a being was seen towards night,
Then, then said the lady yclept near and dear,
"Now mind what I tell you, the Lambs will be here."
So I poked up the flame, and she got out the tea,
And down we both sat, as prepared as could be;
And there, sure as fate, came the knock of you two.
Then the lantern, the laugh, and the "Well, how d'ye do?"
Then your palm tow'rds the fire, and your face turn'd to me,
And shawls and great-coats being—where they should be,—
And due "never saw's" being paid to the weather,
We cherished our knees, and sat sipping together,
And leaving the world to the fogs and the fighters,
Discussed the pretensions of all sorts of writers;
Of Shakespeare's coëvals, all spirits divine;
Of Chapman, whose Homer's a fine rough old wine;

Of Marvell, wit, patriot, and poet, who knew
How to give, both at once, Charles and Cromwell their due.
Of Spenser, who wraps you, wherever you are,
In a bow'r of seclusion beneath a sweet star;
Of Richardson, too, who afflicts us so long,
We begin to suspect him of nerves over strong;
In short, of all those who give full-measur'd page,
Not forgetting Sir Thomas, my ancestor sage,
Who delighted (so happy were all his digestions)
In puzzling his head with impossible questions.[137]

But *now*, Charles—you never (so blissful you deem me)
Come lounging, with twirl of umbrella to see me.
In vain have we hoped to be set at our ease
By the rains which you know used to bring Lamb and pease;
In vain we look out like the children in Thomson,
And say, in our innocence, "Surely he'll come soon."
'Tis true, I do live in a vale, at my will,
With sward to my gateway, and trees on the hill:
My health too gets on: and now autumn is nigh,
The sun has come back, and there's really blue sky;
But then, the late weather, I think, had its merits,
And might have induc'd you to look at one's spirits;
We hadn't much thunder and lightning, I own:
But the rains might have led you to walk out of town;
And what made us think your desertion still stranger,
The roads were so bad, there was really some danger.

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM HAZLITT.

Et modo qua nostri spatiantur in urbe quirites,
Et modo villarum proxima rura placent.—MILTON, Eleg. 7.

Enjoying now the range of town at ease,
And now the neighbouring rural villages.

DEAR HAZLITT, whose tact intellectual is such,
That it seems to feel truth, as pure matter of touch,—
Who in politics, arts, metaphysics, poetics,
To critics in these times, are health to cosmetics,
And, nevertheless, or I rather should say,
For that very reason,—can relish boy's play,

And turning on all sides, through pleasures and cares,
Find nothing more precious than laughs and fresh airs,—

One's life, I conceive, might go prettily down,
In a due easy mixture of country and town ;—
Not after the fashion of most with two houses,
Who gossip, and gape, and just follow their spouses,
And let their abode be wherever it will,
Are the same vacant, house-keeping animals still ;—
But with due sense of each, and of all that it yields,—
In the town, of the town,—in the fields, of the fields ;—
In the one, for example, to feel as we go on,
That streets are about us, arts, people, and so on;
In t'other, to value the stillness, the breeze,
And love to see farms, and to get among trees.

Each his liking, of course,—so that this be the rule.—
For my part, who went in the city to school,
And whenever I got in a field, felt my soul in it
—*Spring* so, that like a young horse I could roll in it,—
My inclinations are much what they were,
And cannot dispense, in the first place, with air;
But then I would have the most rural of nooks
Just near enough town to make use of its books,
And to walk there, whenever I chose to make calls,
To look at the ladies, and lounge at the stalls.

To tell you the truth, I could spend very well
Whole mornings in this way 'twixt here and Pall Mall,
And make my gloves' fingers as black as my hat,
In pulling the books up from this stall and that :—
Then turning home gently through field and o'er style,
Partly reading a purchase, or rhyming the while,
Take my dinner (to make a long evening) at two,
With a few droppers-in, like my Cousin and you,
Who can season the talk with the right-flavour'd Attic,
Too witty, for tattling,—too wise, for dogmatic ;—
Then take down an author, whom one of us mentions,
And doat, for a while, on his jokes or inventions ;
Then have Mozart touch'd, on our bottle's completion,
Or one of your fav'rite trim ballads Venetian :—

Then up for a walk before tea down a valley,
And so to come back through a leafy-wall'd alley,
In which the sun peeping, as into a chamber,
Looks gold on the leaves, turning some to sheer amber:
Then tea made by one, who (although my wife she be,)
If Jove were to drink it, would soon be his Hebe;
Then silence a little,—a creeping twilight,—
Then an egg for your supper, with lettuces white,
And a moon and friend's arm to go home with at night.

Now this I call passing a few devout hours
Becoming a world that has friendships and flowers;
That has lips also, made for still more than to chat to;
And if it has rain, has a rainbow for that too.
"Lord bless us!" exclaims some old hunks in a shop,
"What useless young dogs!" and falls combing a crop.
"How idle!" another cries—"really a sin!"
And starting up, takes his first customer in.
"At least," cries another, "it's nothing but pleasure;"
Then longs for the Monday, quite sick of his leisure.
"What toys!" cries the sage haggard statesman,—"what stuff!"
Then fillips his ribbon, to shake off the snuff.
"How profane!" cries the preacher, proclaiming his message;
Then calls God's creation a vile dirty passage.
"Lips too!" cries a vixen,—and fidgets, and stirs,
And concludes (which is true) that I didn't mean hers.

TO BARRON FIELD.[138]

Dear Field, my old friend, who love straightforward verse,
And will take it, like marriage, for better, for worse,—
Who cheered my fire-side, when we grew up together,
And still warm my heart in these times and this weather;
I know you'll be glad to see, under my hand,
That I'm still, as the phrase is, alive in the land,
When you hear, that since meeting the bright-eyed and witty,
I've been asked to an absolute feast in the city!

Yes, Barron, no more of the Nelsons and Jervises :—
Dinner's the place for the hottest of services ;—
There's the array, and the ardour to win,
The clashing, and splashing, and crashing, and din ;
With fierce intercepting of convoys of butter,
And phrases and outcries tremendous to utter,—
Blood, devils, and drum-sticks,—now cut it—the jowl there—
Brains, bones, head and shoulders, and into the sole there !
The veterans too, round you—how obviously brave !
What wounds and what swellings they bear to their grave !
Some red as a fever, some pallid as death,
Some balustrade-legg'd, others panting for breath,
Some jaundiced, some jaded, some almost a jelly,
And numbers with horrid contusion of belly.

No wonder the wise look on dinners like these,
As so much sheer warfare with pain and disease.
Indeed, you may see by the gestures and grins
Which some dishes make, how they wait for one's sins ;—
The gape of a cod-fish, and round staring eye,
The claws that threat up from a fierce pigeon pie,—
Don't they warn us, with signs at which heroes might shiver,
Of wounds in the midriff, and scars in the liver ?
Even hares become bold in so desperate a case,
And with hollow defiance look full in one's face.

This made, t'other day, a physician declare,
That disease, *bonâ fide*, was part of our fare.
For example, he held that a plate of green fruit
Was not only substance, but colic to boot ;
That veal, besides making an exquisite dish,
Was a fine indigestion, and so was salt-fish ;
That a tongue was most truly a thing to provoke,
Hasty-pudding slow poison, and trifle no joke.
Had you asked him accordingly, what was the fare,
When he dined t'other day with the vicar or may'r,
He'd have said, "Oh, of course, everything of the best,
Gout, headache, and fever, and pain in the chest."
'Twas thus too at table, when helping the meat,
He'd have had you encourage the people to eat,—

As " Pray, Sir, allow me,—a slice of this gout;
I could get no St. Anthony's fire—it's quite out.
Mr. P. there,—more nightmare? my hand's quite at leisure;
A glass of slow fever? I'm sure with great pleasure.
My dear Mrs. H., why your plate's always empty!
Now can't a small piece of this agony tempt ye?
And then leaning over, with spoon and with smile,
Do let me, Miss Betsy,—a little more bile?—
Have I no more persuasion with you too, Miss Virtue?
A little, I'm sure, of this cough couldn't hurt you."

Now all this is good, and didactic enough
For those who'd make bodies mere cushions to stuff:
Excess is bad always;—but there's a relation
Of this same Excess, sometimes called Moderation,
Who wonders, and smiles, and concludes you a glutton,
If helped more than he is to turnips and mutton;—
A Southey in soups, who though changing his whim,
Would still have your living take pattern by him;—[139]
In short, a Procrustes, who'd measure one's dishes,
As t'other did beds, to his own size or wishes.

Alas, we might ask every person we meet
To talk just as we do, as well as to eat,—
Enjoin the same rest to the brisk and tir'd out,
One repair to all tenements, shatter'd or stout,
One pay for all earnings, contents for all cases,
Nay, quarrel with people for difference of faces,
And turning beside us, with angry surprise,
Say, " Why a'n't you like me, Sir,—nose, mouth, and eyes?"

Each his ways, each his wants; and then taking our food,
'Tis exercise turns it to glad-flowing blood.
We must shun, it is true, what we find doesn't suit
With our special digestions,—wine, water, or fruit;
But from all kinds of action one thing we may learn,—
That nature'll indulge us, provided we earn.
We study her fields, and find " books in the brooks;"
We range them, ride, walk, and come safe from the cooks.

Thus I look upon shoes whiten'd thickly with dust,
As entitling the bearer to double pie-crust;

A mere turnpike ticket's a passport to lamb;
But a row up the Thames lands you safely at Ham.

And now, after all, why this subject to you,
To whom I am bidding a long, long adieu?
Why, because not content with two dinners, you see,
To take my leave of you, I needs must have three;
And so have insidiously got you to be a
True guest of a poet, and dine in idea.

So here, in your old friend the Barmecide's glass,
Is to you, dear Field, and your new-married lass.
May a breath from blue heaven your vessel attend,
As true to the last, as you've been to your friend;
And may all meet again to grow young in our joys,
And you and I, Barron, be happy old boys.

ON HEARING A LITTLE MUSICAL BOX.

Dilettevol' suoni
Faceano intorno l' aria tintinnire
D' armonia dolce, e di concenti buoni.
ARIOSTO.

HALLO!—what?—where, what can it be
That strikes up so deliciously?
I never in my life—what no!
That little tin-box playing so?
It really seemed as if a sprite
Had struck among us, swift and light,
And come from some minuter star
To treat us with his pearl guitar.

Hark! it scarcely ends the strain,
But it gives it o'er again,
Lovely thing!—and runs along,
Just as if it knew the song,
Touching out, smooth, clear and small,
Harmony, and shake, and all,
Now upon the treble lingering,
Dancing now as if 'twere fingering,

And at last upon the close,
Coming with serene repose.

O full of sweetness, crispness, ease,
Compound of lovely smallnesses,
Accomplished trifle,—tell us what
To call thee, and disgrace thee not.
Worlds of fancies come about us,
Thrill within and glance without us.
Now we think that there must be
In thee some humanity,
Such a taste composed and fine
Smiles along that touch of thine.

Now we call thee heavenly rain,
For thy fresh, continued strain;
Now a hail, that on the ground
Splits into light leaps of sound;
Now the concert, neat and nice,
Of a pigmy paradise;
Sprinkles then from singing fountains;
Fairies heard on tops of mountains;
Nightingales endued with art,
Caught in listening to Mozart:
Stars that make a distant tinkling,
While their happy eyes are twinkling;
Sounds for scattered rills to flow to;
Music, for the flowers to blow to.

HEARING MUSIC.

(*Set to music by* VINCENT NOVELLO.)

WHEN lovely sounds about my ears
Like winds in Eden's tree-tops rise,
And make me, though my spirit hears,
For very luxury close my eyes,

Let none but friends be round about
Who love the smoothing joy like me,
That so the charm be felt throughout,
And all be harmony.

And when we reach the close divine,
Then let the hand of her I love
Come with its gentle palm on mine,
As soft as snow or lighting dove;
And let, by stealth, that more than friend
Look sweetness in my opening eyes,
For only so such dreams should end,
Or wake in Paradise.

THE LOVER OF MUSIC TO HIS PIANO-FORTE.

Oh friend, whom glad or grave we seek,
Heav'n-holding shrine!
I ope thee, touch thee, hear thee speak,
And peace is mine.
No fairy casket full of bliss,
Out-values thee:
Love only, waken'd with a kiss,
More sweet may be.

To thee, when our full hearts o'erflow
In griefs or joys,
Unspeakable emotions owe
A fitting voice:
Mirth flies to thee, and Love's unrest,
And Memory dear.
And Sorrow, with his tighten'd breast,
Comes for a tear.

Oh since few joys of human mould
Thus wait us still,
Thrice bless'd be thine, thou gentle fold
Of peace at will.

No change, no sullenness, no cheat,
In thee we find;
Thy saddest voice is ever sweet,—
Thine answer, kind.

A THOUGHT OR TWO ON READING POMFRET'S "CHOICE."

1823.

I HAVE been reading Pomfret's "Choice" this spring,
A pretty kind of—sort of—kind of thing,
Not much a verse, and poem none at all,
Yet, as they say, extremely natural.
And yet I know not. There's an art in pies,
In raising crusts as well as galleries;
And he's the poet, more or less, who knows
The charm that hallows the least truth from prose,
And dresses it in its mild singing clothes.
Not oaks alone are trees, nor roses flowers;
Much humble wealth makes rich this world of ours.
Nature from some sweet energy throws up
Alike the pine-mount and the buttercup;
And truth she makes so precious, that to paint
Either, shall shrine an artist like a saint,
And bring him in his turn the crowds that press
Round Guido's saints or Titian's goddesses.

Our trivial poet hit upon a theme
Which all men love, an old, sweet household dream:—
Pray, reader, what is yours?—I know full well
What sort of home should grace *my* garden-bell,—
No tall, half-furnish'd, gloomy, shivering house,
That worst of mountains labouring with a mouse;
Nor should I choose to fill a tawdry niche in
A Grecian temple, opening to a kitchen.
The frogs in Homer should have had such boxes,
Or Æsop's frog, whose heart was like the ox's.
Such puff about high roads, so grand, so small,
With wings and what not, portico and all,

And poor drench'd pillars, which it seems a sin
Not to mat up at night-time, or take in.
I'd live in none of those. Nor would I have
Veranda'd windows to forestall my grave;
Veranda'd truly, from the northern heat!
And cut down to the floor to comfort one's cold feet!
My house should be of brick, more wide than high,
With sward up to the path, and elm-trees nigh;
A good old country lodge, half hid with blooms
Of honied green, and quaint with straggling rooms,
A few of which, white-bedded and well swept,
For friends, whose name endear'd them, should be kept.
The tip-toe traveller, peeping through the boughs
O'er my low wall, should bless the pleasant house:
And that my luck might not seem ill-bestow'd,
A bench and spring should greet him on the road.

My grounds should not be large. I like to go
To Nature for a range, and prospect too,
And cannot fancy she'd comprise for me,
Even in a park, her all-sufficiency.
Besides, my thoughts, fly far; and when at rest,
Love, not a watch-tow'r, but a lulling nest.
A Chiswick or a Chatsworth might, I grant,
Visit my dreams with an ambitious want;
But then I should be forced to know the weight
Of splendid cares, new to my former state;
And these 'twould far more fit me to admire,
Borne by the graceful ease of noblest Devonshire.
Such grounds, however, as I had, should look
Like "something" still; have seats, and walks, and brook;
One spot for flowers, the rest all turf and trees;
For I'd not grow my own bad lettuces.
I'd build a cover'd path too against rain,
Long, peradventure, as my whole domain,
And so be sure of generous exercise,
The youth of age and med'cine of the wise.
And this reminds me, that behind some screen
About my grounds, I'd have a bowling-green;

Such as in wits' and merry women's days
Suckling preferr'd before his walk of bays.
You may still see them, dead as haunts of fairies,
By the old seats of Killigrews and Careys,
Where all, alas! is vanish'd from the ring,
Wits and black eyes, the skittles and the king!
Fishing I hate, because I think about it,
Which makes it right that I should do without it.
A dinner, or a death, might not be much,
But cruelty's a rod I dare not touch.
I own I cannot see my right to feel
For my own jaws, and tear a trout's with steel;
To troll him here and there, and spike, and strain,
And let him loose to jerk him back again.
Fancy a preacher at this sort of work,
Not with his trout or gudgeon, but his clerk:
The clerk leaps gaping at a tempting bit,
And, hah! an ear-ache with a knife in it!
That there is pain and evil, is no rule
That I should make it greater, like a fool;
Or rid me of my rust so vile a way,
As long as there's a single manly play.
Nay, fool's a word my pen unjustly writes,
Knowing what hearts and brains have dozed o'er "bites;"
But the next inference to be drawn might be,
That higher beings made a trout of me;
Which I would rather should not be the case,
Though "Izaak"[140] were the saint to tear my face,
And, stooping from his heaven with rod and line,
Made the fell sport, with his old dreams divine,
As pleasant to his taste, as rough to mine.
Such sophistry, no doubt, saves half the hell,
But fish would have preferr'd his reasoning well,
And, if my gills concern'd him, so should I.
The dog, I grant, is in that "equal sky;"
But, heav'n be prais'd, he's not my deity.
All manly games I'd play at,—golf and quoits,
And cricket, to set lungs and limbs to rights,
And make me conscious, with a due respect,
Of muscles one forgets by long neglect.

With these, or bowls aforesaid, and a ride,
Books, music, friends, the day would I divide,
Most with my family, but when alone,
Absorb'd in some new poem of my own;
A task which makes my time so richly pass,
So like a sunshine cast through painted glass.
(Save where poor Captain Sword crashes the panes,)
That could my friends live too, and were the gains
Of toiling men but freed from sordid fears,
Well could I walk this earth a thousand years.

SUDDEN FINE WEATHER.

Reader! what soul that loves a verse, can see
The spring return, nor glow like you and me?
Hear the quick birds, and see the landscape fill,
Nor long to utter his melodious will?

This more than ever leaps into the veins,
When spring has been delay'd by winds and rains,
And coming with a burst, comes like a show,
Blue all above, and basking green below,
And all the people culling the sweet prime:
Then issues forth the bee to clutch the thyme,
And the bee poet rushes into rhyme.

For lo! no sooner has the cold withdrawn,
Than the bright elm is tufted on the lawn;
The merry sap has run up in the bowers,
And bursts the windows of the buds in flowers;
With song the bosoms of the birds run o'er,
The cuckoo calls, the swallow's at the door,
And apple-trees at noon, with bees alive,
Burn with the golden chorus of the hive.
Now all these sweets, these sounds, this vernal blaze,
Is but one joy, express'd a thousand ways:
And honey from the flowers, and song from birds,
Are from the poet's pen his overflowing words.

Ah friends! methinks it were a pleasant sphere,
If, like the trees, we blossom'd every year;
If locks grew thick again, and rosy dyes
Return'd in cheeks, and raciness in eyes,
And all around us, vital to the tips,
The human orchard laugh'd with cherry lips!

Lord! what a burst of merriment and play,
Fair dames, were that! and what a first of May!
So natural is the wish, that bards gone by
Have left it, all, in some immortal sigh!

And yet the winter months were not so well:
Who would like changing, as the seasons fell?
Fade every year; and stare, midst ghastly friends,
With falling hairs, and stuck-out fingers' ends?
Besides, this tale of youth that comes again,
Is no more true of apple-trees than men.
The Swedish sage, the Newton of the flow'rs,[141]
Who first found out those worlds of paramours,
Tells us, that every blossom that we see
Boasts in its walls a separate family;
So that a tree is but a sort of stand,
That holds those filial fairies in its hand;
Just as Swift's giant might have held a bevy
Of Lilliputian ladies, or a levee.
It is not he that blooms: it is his race,
Who honour his old arms, and hide his rugged face.

Ye wits and bards then, pray discern your duty,
And learn the *lastingness* of human beauty.
Your finest fruit to some two months may reach:
I've known a cheek at *forty* like a peach.

But see! the weather calls me. Here's a bee
Comes bounding in my room imperiously,
And talking to himself, hastily burns
About mine ear, and so in heat returns.
O little brethren of the fervid soul,
Kissers of flowers, lords of the golden bowl,

I follow to your fields and tufted brooks:
Winter's the time to which the poet looks
For hiving his sweet thoughts, and making honied books.

ALTER ET IDEM.

A CHEMICO-POETICAL THOUGHT.

O Lovers, ye that poorly love, and ye
That think ye love beyond sobriety,
Twine me a wreath, if but for only this,—
I'll *prove* the roses in the poet's kiss.
Not metaphors alone are lips and roses,
Whate'er the gallant or the churl supposes:
Ask what compounds them both, and science tells
Of marvellous results in crucibles,—
Of common elements,—say two in five,—
By which their touch is soft, their bloom's alive;
So that the lip and leaf do really, both,
Hold a shrewd cut of the same velvet cloth.
The maxim holds, where'er the compounds fall,—
In birds, in brooks, in wall-flowers and the wall:
The beauty shares them with her very shawl.

'Tis true, the same things go to harden rocks;
There's iron in the shade of Julia's locks;
And when we kiss Jacintha's tears away,
A briny pity melts in what we say:
But read these common properties aright,
And shame in love is quench'd, and wise delight.
The very coarsest clay, the meanest shard
That hides the beetle in the public yard,
Shares with the stars, and all that rolls them on,
Much more the face we love to look upon;
And be the drops compounded as they may,
That bring sweet sorrows from sweet eyes away,
Where's the mean soul shall honour not the tears
Shed for a lover's hopes, a mother's fears?

Rise, truth and love, and vindicate my rhyme!
The crabbed Scot, that once upon a time
Ask'd what a poem prov'd, and just had wit
To prove himself a fool, by asking it,
E'en he had blood, as Burns or Wallace had,
Or as the lip that makes a painter mad.

AN ANGEL IN THE HOUSE.

How sweet it were, if without feeble fright,
Or dying of the dreadful beauteous sight,
An angel came to us, and we could bear
To see him issue from the silent air
At evening in our room, and bend on ours
His divine eyes, and bring us from his bowers
News of dear friends, and children who have never
Been dead indeed,—as we shall know forever.
Alas! we think not what we daily see
About our hearths,—angels, that *are* to be,
Or may be if they will, and we prepare
Their souls and ours to meet in happy air;—
A child, a friend, a wife whose soft heart sings
In unison with ours, breeding its future wings.

WEALTH AND WOMANHOOD.

Have you seen an heiress
In her jewels mounted,
Till her wealth and she seem'd one,
And she might be counted?

Have you seen a bosom
With one rose betwixt it?
And did you mark the grateful blush,
While the bridegroom fix'd it?

A HYMN TO BISHOP ST. VALENTINE.

THE day, the only day returns,
The true *redde letter* day returns,
When summer time in winter burns;
When a February dawn
Is open'd by two sleeves in lawn
Fairer than Aurora's fingers,
And a burst of all bird singers,
And a shower of *billet-doux*,
Tinging cheeks with rosy hues,
And over all a face divine,
Face good-natured, face most fine,
Face most anti-saturnine,
Even thine, yea, even thine,
Saint of sweethearts, Valentine!

See, he's dawning! See, he comes
With the jewels on his thumbs
Glancing us a ruby ray
(For he's sun and all to-day)!
See his lily sleeves! and now
See the mitre on his brow!
See his truly pastoral crook,
And beneath his arm his book
(Some sweet tome *De Arte Amandi*):
And his hair, 'twixt saint and *dandy*,
Lovelocks touching either cheek,
And black, though with a silver streak,
As though for age both young and old,
And his look, 'twixt meek and bold,
Bowing round on either side,
Sweetly lipp'd and earnest eyed,
And lifting still, to bless the land,
His very gentlemanly hand.

Hail! oh hail! and thrice again
Hail, thou clerk of sweetest pen!
Connubialest of clergymen!

Exquisite bishop!—not at all
Like Bishop Bonner; no, nor Hall,
That gibing priest; nor Atterbury,
Although he was ingenious, very,
And wrote the verses on the "Fan;"
But then he swore,—unreverend man!
But very like good Bishop Berkeley,
Equally benign and clerkly;
Very like Rundle, Shipley, Hoadley,
And all the genial of the godly;
Like De Sales, and like De Paul;
But most, I really think, of all,
Like Bishop Mant, whose sweet theology
Includeth verse and ornithology,
And like a proper rubric star,
Hath given us a new "Calendar,"
So full of flowers and birdly talking,
'Tis like an Eden bower to walk in.
Such another See is thine,
O thou Bishop Valentine;
Such another, but as big
To that, as Eden to a fig;
For all the world's thy diocese,
All the towns and all the trees,
And all the barns and villages:
The whole rising generation
Is thy loving congregation:
Enviable's indeed thy station;
Tithes cause thee no reprobation,
Dean and chapter's no vexation,
Heresy no spoliation.
Begg'd is thy participation;
No one wishes thee translation,
Except for some sweet explanation.
All decree thee consecration!
Beatification!
Canonization!
All cry out, with heart-prostration,
Sweet's thy text-elucidation,
Sweet, oh sweet's thy visitation,
And Paradise thy confirmation.

TO MAY.

May, thou month of rosy beauty,
Month, when pleasure is a duty;
Month of maids that milk the kine,
Bosom rich, and breath divine;
Month of bees, and month of flowers,
Month of blossom-laden bowers;
Month of little hands with daisies,
Lovers' love, and poets' praises;
O thou merry month complete,
May, thy very name is sweet!
May was *maid* in olden times,
And is still in Scottish rhymes;
May's the blooming hawthorn bough;
May's the month that's laughing now.
I no sooner write the word,
Than it seems as though it heard,
And looks up, and laughs at me,
Like a sweet face rosily,—
Like an actual colour bright,
Flushing from the paper's white;
Like a bride that knows her power,
Started in a summer bower.

If the rains that do us wrong
Come to keep the winter long,
And deny us thy sweet looks,
I can love thee, sweet, in books,
Love thee in the poets' pages,
Where they keep thee green for ages;
Love and read thee, as a lover
Reads his lady's letters over,
Breathing blessings on the art,
Which commingles those that part.

There is May in books forever;
May will part from Spenser never;
May's in Milton, May's in Prior,
May's in Chaucer, Thomson, Dyer;

May's in all the Italian books;
She has old and modern nooks,
Where she sleeps with nymphs and elves
In happy places they call shelves,
And will rise, and dress your rooms
With a drapery thick with blooms.

Come, ye rains then, if ye will,
May's at home, and with me still:
But come rather, thou, good weather,
And find us in the fields together.

TO JUNE.

May's a word 'tis sweet to hear,
Laughter of the budding year;
Sweet it is to start, and say
On May-morning, "This is May!"
But there also breathes a tune—
Hear it—in the sound of "June."
June's a month, and June's a name,
Never yet hath had its fame.
Summer's in the sound of June,
Summer, and a deepen'd tune
Of the bees and of the birds,—
And of loitering lover's words,—
And the brooks that, as they go,
Seem to think aloud, yet low;
And the voice of early heat,
Where the mirth-spun insects meet;
And the very colour's tone
Russet now, and fervid grown;
All a voice, as if it spoke
Of the brown wood's cottage smoke,
And the sun, and bright green oak.
O come quickly, show thee soon,
Come at once with all thy noon,
Manly, joyous, gipsy June.

May, the jade, with her fresh cheek
And the love the bards bespeak,
May, by coming first in sight,
Half defrauds thee of thy right,
For her best is shared by thee
With a wealthier potency,
So that thou dost bring us in
A sort of May-time masculine,
Fit for action or for rest,
As the luxury seems the best,
Bearding now the morning breeze,
Or in love with paths of trees,
Or dispos'd, full length, to lie
With a hand-enshaded eye
On thy warm and golden slopes,
Basker in the buttercups,
Listening with nice distant ears
To the shepherd's clapping shears,
Or the next field's laughing play
In the happy wars of hay,
While its perfume breathes all over,
Or the bean comes fine or clover.

O could I walk round the earth,
With a heart to share my mirth,
With a look to love me ever,
Thoughtful much, but sullen never,
I could be content to see
June and no variety;
Loitering here, and living there,
With a book and frugal fare,
With a finer gipsy time,
And a cuckoo in the clime,
Work at morn, and mirth at noon,
And sleep beneath the sacred moon.

CHRISTMAS.

A SONG FOR THE YOUNG AND THE WISE.

CHRISTMAS comes! He comes, he comes,
Usher'd with a rain of plums;

Hollies in the windows greet him;
Schools come driving post to meet him;
Gifts precede him, bells proclaim him,
Every mouth delights to name him;
Wet, and cold, and wind, and dark,
Make him but the warmer mark;
And yet he comes not one-embodied,
Universal 's the blithe godhead,
And in every festal house
Presence hath ubiquitous.
Curtains, those snug room-enfolders,
Hang upon his million shoulders.
And he has a million eyes
Of fire, and eats a million pies,
And is very merry and wise;
Very wise and very merry,
And loves a kiss beneath the berry.

Then full many a shape hath he,
All in said ubiquity:
Now is he a green array,
And now an "eve," and now a "day;"
Now he's town gone *out* of town,
And now a feast in civic gown,
And now the pantomime and clown
With a crack upon the crown,
And all sorts of tumbles down;
And then he's music in the night,
And the money gotten by't:[142]
He's a man that can't write verses,
Bringing some to ope your purses;[143]
He's a turkey, he's a goose,
He's oranges unfit for use;
He's a kiss that loves to grow
Underneath the mistletoe;
And he's forfeits, cards, and wassails,
And a king and queen with vassals,
All the "quizzes" of the time
Drawn and quarter'd with a rhyme;
And then, for their revival's sake,
Lo! he's an enormous cake,

With a sugar on the top
Seen before in many a shop,
Where the boys could gaze forever,
They think the cake so very clever.
Then, some morning, in the lurch
Leaving romps, he goes to church,
Looking very grave and thankful,
After which he's just as prankful,
Now a saint, and now a sinner,
But, above all, he's a dinner;
He's a dinner, where you see
Everybody's family;
Beef, and pudding, and mince-pies,
And little boys with laughing eyes,
Whom their seniors ask arch questions,
Feigning fears of indigestions
(As if they, forsooth, the old ones,
Hadn't privately, tenfold ones):
He's a dinner and a fire,
Heap'd beyond your hearts' desire—
Heap'd with log, and bak'd with coals,
Till it roasts your very souls,
And your cheek the fire outstares,
And you all push back your chairs,
And the mirth becomes too great,
And you all sit up too late,
Nodding all with too much head,
And so go off to too much bed.

O plethora of beef and bliss!
Monkish feaster, sly of kiss!
Southern soul in body Dutch!
Glorious time of great Too-Much!
Too much heat, and too much noise,
Too much babblement of boys;
Too much eating, too much drinking,
Too much ev'rything but thinking;
Solely bent to laugh and stuff,
And trample upon base Enough;
Oh, right is thy instinctive praise
Of the wealth of Nature's ways.

Right thy most unthrifty glee,
And pious thy mince-piety!
For behold! great Nature's self
Builds her no abstemious shelf,
But provides (her love is such
For *all*) her own great, good Too-Much,—
Too much grass, and too much tree,
Too much air, and land, and sea,
Too much seed of fruit and flower,
And fish, an unimagin'd dower!
(In whose single roe shall be
Life enough to stock the sea—
Endless ichthyophagy!)
Ev'ry instant through the day
Worlds of life are thrown away;
Worlds of life, and worlds of pleasure,
Not for lavishment of treasure,
But because she's so immensely
Rich, and loves us so intensely,
She would have us, once for all,
Wake at her benignant call,
And all grow wise, and all lay down
Strife, and jealousy, and frown,
And, like the sons of one great mother,
Share, and be blest, with one another.

RONDEAU.

Jenny kiss'd me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kiss'd me.

BURNS AND TULLOCHGORUM.

Come, let us have a dance, and make
The mirth complete for Burns's sake,
For how can feet not long to take
The steps he took before 'em ?
Who, who, can keep them ever still,
Who can keep them, who can keep them,
Who can keep them ever still,
When strong the will comes o'er 'em ?
Who can keep them ever still,
When song itself shall urge the will,
And music grind, like any mill,
The reel of Tullochgorum ?

" O, Tullochgorum's my delight,"
Said Burns's fine old herald, hight
The Reverend Mr. Skinner, wight
That hated false decorum :
It was his, and Burns's too,
His and Burns's, his and Burns's,
It was his, and Burns's too,
And all such true *virorum :*
It was his, and Burns's too,
And doubly thus becomes his due
From all that ever shake a shoe
At sound of Tullochgorum.

For Tullochgorum's such a dance,
As never yet was found in France,
Though some French dames, whose sons could prance,
To Scottish husbands bore 'em :
Mirth it has and muscle both,
Mirth and muscle, mirth and muscle,
Mirth it has, and muscle both,
And graces *angelorum :*[144]
Mirth it has and muscle both,
And makes all friends, as Skinner show'th :
Quakers themselves would take an oath,
There's nought like Tullochgorum.

'Twas in this dance, there's not a doubt,
The poet's Jane first twined about
His heart, when footing in and out,
Her charms made eyes adore 'em:
She was a singing, dancing jade,
Singing, dancing, singing, dancing,
She was a singing, dancing jade,
And full of grace *flexorum*:[145]
She was a singing, dancing jade,
And nought beside; so Envy said;
But capital good wife she made,
Inspired by Tullochgorum.

Who better could have played his part,
In such a dance, than he whose art
Of pleasing was all life and heart,
And no fatigue could floor 'em?
Think, lads and lasses, how he bad
Lads and lasses, lads and lasses,
Think, lads and lasses, how he bad
Your loves all truthward soar 'em:[146]
Think how he made kind natures glad,
And only brutes and bigots sad,
Then, if you can, don't dance like mad
The reel of Tullochgorum.

LOVE-LETTERS MADE OF FLOWERS.

ON A PRINT OF ONE OF THEM IN A BOOK.

An exquisite invention this,
Worthy of Love's most honied kiss,
This art of writing *billet-doux*
In buds, and odours, and bright hues!
In saying all one feels and thinks
In clever daffodils and pinks;
In puns of tulips; and in phrases,
Charming for their truth, of daisies;[147]
Uttering, as well as silence may,
The sweetest words the sweetest way.

How fit too for the lady's bosom!
The place where *billet-doux* repose 'em.

What delight, in some sweet spot
Combining *love* with *garden* plot,
At once to cultivate one's flowers
And one's epistolary powers!
Growing one's own choice words and fancies
In orange tubs, and beds of pansies;
One's sighs and passionate declarations
In odorous rhetoric of carnations;
Seeing how far one's stocks will reach;
Taking due care one's flowers of speech
To guard from blight as well as bathos,
And watering, every day, one's pathos!

A letter comes, just gather'd. We
Dote on its tender brilliancy;
Inhale its delicate expressions
Of balm and pea, and its confessions
Made with as sweet a *Maiden's Blush*
As ever morn bedew'd on bush,
('Tis in reply to one of ours,
Made of the most convincing flowers,)
Then after we have kiss'd its wit
And heart, in water putting it,
(To keep its remarks fresh,) go round
Our little eloquent plot of ground,
And with enchanted hands compose
Our answer all of lily and rose,
Of tuberose and of violet,
And *Little Darling* (Mignonette)
Of *Look at me* and *Call me to you,*
(Words that while they greet, go through you),
Of *Thoughts,* of *Flames, Forget-me-not,*
Bridewort,—in short, the whole blest lot
Of vouchers for a life-long kiss,
And literally, breathing bliss.

SONGS AND CHORUS OF THE FLOWERS.

ROSES.

We are blushing Roses,
Bending with our fulness,
'Midst our close-capp'd sister buds,
Warming the green coolness.

Whatsoe'er of beauty
Yearns and yet reposes,
Blush, and bosom, and sweet breath,
Took a shape in roses.

Hold one of us lightly,—
See from what a slender
Stalk we bow'r in heavy blooms,
And roundness rich and tender.

Know you not our only
Rival flow'r—the human?
Loveliest weight on lightest foot,
Joy-abundant woman?

LILIES.

We are Lilies fair,
The flower of virgin light;
Nature held us forth, and said,
"Lo! my thoughts of white."

Ever since then, angels
Hold us in their hands;
You may see them where they take
In pictures their sweet stands.

Like the garden's angels
Also do we seem,
And not the less for being crown'd
With a golden dream.

Could you see around us
The enamour'd air,
You would see it pale with bliss
To hold a thing so fair.

VIOLETS.

We are violets blue,
For our sweetness found
Careless in the mossy shades,
Looking on the ground.
Love's dropp'd eyelids and a kiss,—
Such our breath and blueness is.

Io, the mild shape
Hidden by Jove's fears,
Found us first i' the sward, when she
For hunger stoop'd in tears.
" Wheresoe'er her lip she sets,"
Jove said, " be breaths call'd Violets."

SWEET-BRIAR.

Wild-rose, Sweet-briar, Eglantine,
All these pretty names are mine,
And scent in every leaf is mine,
And a leaf for all is mine,
And the scent—oh, that's divine!
Happy-sweet and pungent-fine,
Pure as dew, and pick'd as wine.

As the rose in gardens dress'd
Is the lady self-possess'd,
I'm the lass in simple vest,
The country lass whose blood's the best.
Were the beams that thread the briar
In the morn with golden fire
Scented too, they'd smell like me,
All Elysian pungency.

POPPIES.

We are slumberous poppies,
Lords of Lethe downs,
Some awake, and some asleep,
Sleeping in our crowns.
What perchance our dreams may know,
Let our serious beauty show.

Central depth of purple,
Leaves more bright than rose,
Who shall tell what brightest thought
Out of darkest grows?
Who, through what funereal pain
Souls to love and peace attain?

Visions aye are on us,
Unto eyes of power,
Pluto's always setting sun,
And Proserpine's bower:
There, like bees, the pale souls come
For our drink with drowsy hum.

Taste, ye mortals, also;
Milky-hearted, we;
Taste, but with a reverent care;
Active-patient be.
Too much gladness brings to gloom
Those who on the gods presume.[148]

SONGS OF THE FLOWERS.

We are the sweet Flowers,
Born of sunny showers,
Think, whene'er you see us, what our beauty saith:
Utterance mute and bright
Of some unknown delight,
We fill the air with pleasure, by our simple breath:
All who see us, love us;
We befit all places;
Unto sorrow we give smiles; and unto graces, graces.

Mark our ways, how noiseless
All, and sweetly voiceless,
Though the March winds pipe to make our passage clear;
Not a whisper tells
Where our small seed dwells,
Nor is known the moment green, when our tips appear.

We thread the earth in silence,
In silence build our bowers,
And leaf by leaf in silence show, till we laugh atop, sweet Flowers!

The dear lumpish baby,
Humming with the May-bee,
Hails us with his bright stare, stumbling through the grass;
The honey-dropping moon,
On a night in June,
Kisses our pale pathway leaves, that felt the bridegroom pass.
Age, the wither'd clinger,
On us mutely gazes,
And wraps the thought of his last bed in his childhood's daisies.

See, and scorn all duller
Taste, how heav'n loves colour,
How great Nature, clearly, joys in red and green;
What sweet thoughts she thinks
Of violets and pinks,
And a thousand flushing hues, made solely to be seen;
See her whitest lilies
Chill the silver showers,
And what a red mouth has her rose, the woman of the flowers!

Uselessness divinest
Of a use the finest
Painteth us, the teachers of the end of use;
Travellers weary-eyed
Bless us far and wide;
Unto sick and prison'd thoughts we give sudden truce;
Not a poor town window
Loves its sickliest planting,
But its wall speaks loftier truth than Babylon's whole vaunting.

Sage are yet the uses
Mix'd with our sweet juices

Whether man or may-fly profit of the balm;
As fair fingers heal'd
Knights from the olden field,
We hold cups of mightiest force to give the wildest calm.
E'en the terror Poison
Hath its plea for blooming;
Life it gives to reverent lips, though death to the presuming.

And oh! our sweet soul-taker,
That thief the honey-maker,
What a house hath he, by the thymy glen!
In his talking rooms
How the feasting fumes,
Till his gold cups overflow to the mouths of men!
The butterflies come aping
Those fine thieves of ours,
And flutter round our rifled tops, like tickled flowers with flowers.

See those tops, how beauteous!
What fair service duteous
Round some idol waits, as on their lord the Nine?
Elfin court 'twould seem;
And taught perchance that dream,
Which the old Greek mountain dreamt upon nights divine.
To expound such wonder
Human speech avails not:
Yet there dies no poorest weed, that such a glory exhales not.

Think of all these treasures,
Matchless works and pleasures,
Every one a marvel, more than thought can say;
Then think in what bright show'rs
We thicken fields and bowers,
And with what heaps of sweetness half stifle wanton May:
Think of the mossy forests
By the bee-birds haunted,
And all those Amazonian plains, lone lying as enchanted.

Trees themselves are ours;
Fruits are born of flowers;

Peach and roughest nut were blossoms in the spring;
The lusty bee knows well
The news, and comes pell-mell,
And dances in the bloomy thicks with darksome antheming.
Beneath the very burthen
Of planet-pressing ocean
We wash our smiling cheeks in peace, a thought for meek devotion.

Tears of Phœbus,—missings
Of Cytherea's kissings,
Have in us been found, and wise men find them still;
Drooping grace unfurls
Still Hyacinthus' curls,
And Narcissus loves himself in the selfish rill;
Thy red lip, Adonis,
Still is wet with morning;
And the step that bled for thee, the rosy briar adorning.

Oh, true things are fables,
Fit for sagest tables,
And the flowers are true things, yet no fables they;
Fables were not more
Bright, nor lov'd of yore,
Yet they grew not, like the flow'rs, by every old pathway.
Grossest hand can test us;
Fools may prize us never;
Yet we rise, and rise, and rise, marvels sweet for ever.

Who shall say that flowers
Dress not heav'n's own bowers?
Who its love, without them, can fancy,—or sweet floor?
Who shall even dare
To say we sprang not there,
And came not down that Love might bring one piece of heav'n the more?
Oh pray believe that angels
From those blue dominions
Brought us in their white laps down, 'twixt their golden pinions.

ALBUMS.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE ALBUM OF ROTHA QUILLINAN.

An Album! This! Why, 'tis for aught I see,
Sheer wit, and verse, and downright poetry;
A priceless book incipient; a treasure
Of growing pearl; a hoard for pride and pleasure;
A golden begging-box, which pretty Miss
Goes round with, like a gipsy as she is,
From bard to bard, to stock her father's shelf,
Perhaps for cunning dowry to herself.

Albums are records, kept by gentle dames,
To show us that their friends can write their names;
That Miss can draw, or brother John can write
"Sweet lines," or that they know a Mr. White.
The lady comes, with lowly grace upon her,
"'Twill be so kind," and "do her book such honour;"
We bow, smile, deprecate, protest, read o'er
The names to see what has been done before,
Wish to say something wonderful, but can't,
And write, with modest glory, "William Grant."
Johnson succeeds, and Thomson, Jones, and Clarke,
And Cox with an original remark
Out of the Speaker;—then come John's "sweet lines,"
Fanny's "sweet airs," and Jenny's "sweet designs:"
Then Hobbs, Cobbs, Dobbs, Lord Strut, and Lady Brisk,
And, with a flourish underneath him, Fisk.

Alas! why sit I here, committing jokes
On social pleasures and good-humour'd folks,
That see far better with their trusting eyes,
Than all the blinkings of the would-be wise?
Albums are, after all, pleasant inventions,
Make friends more friendly, grace one's good intentions,
Brighten dull names, give great ones kinder looks,
Nay, now and then produce right curious books,
And make the scoffer (as it now does me)
Blush to look round on deathless company.

ULTRA-GERMANO-CRITICASTERISM.

1846.

Would you make blazes
Of ultra-reflectiveness,
Get a few phrases
Of *ob* and *sub*-jectiveness.

Take for your subject
The art of some poet,
And be your whole object
To show that you know it.

Make all you read on him
Seem what *you* thought of it:
Palm your own creed on him,
Though he knew nought of it.

Rave on "æsthetics,"
"Profundity," "purity;"
Damn the dull critics,
And die of obscurity.

BODRYDDAN.

TO THE MEMORY OF B. Y. AND A. M. D.

1836.

Our fairest dreams are made of truths,
Nymphs are sweet women, angels youths,
And Eden was an earthly bower:
Not that the heavens are false;—oh no!
But that the sweetest thoughts that grow
In earth, must have an earthly flower:
Blest, if they know how sweet they are,
And that earth also is a star.

I met a lady by the sea,
A heart long known, a face desir'd,
Who led me with sweet breathful glee
To one that sat retir'd;—
That sat retir'd in reverend chair,
That younger lady's pride and care,

Fading heav'nward beauteously
In a long-drawn life of love,
With smiles below and thoughts above:
And round her play'd that fairy she,
Like Impulse by Tranquillity.

And truly might they, in times old,
Have deem'd her one of fairy mould
Keeping some ancestral queen
Deathless, in a bow'r serene;
For oft she might be noticed walking
Where the seas at night were talking;
Or extracting with deep look
Power from out some learned book;
Or with pencil or with pen
Charming the rapt thoughts of men:
And her eyes! they were so bright,
They seemed to dance with elfin light,
Playmates of pearly smiles, and yet
So often and so sadly wet,
That Pity wonder'd to conceive
How lady so belov'd could grieve.
And oft would both those ladies rare,
Like enchantments out of air,
In a sudden show'r descend
Of balm on want, or flow'rs on friend;
No matter how remote the place,
For fairies laugh at time and space.
From their hearts the gifts were given,
As the light leaps out of heaven.

Their very house was fairy:—none
Might find it without favour won
For some great zeal, like errant-knight,
Or want and sorrow's holy right;
And then they reach'd it by long rounds
Of lanes between thick pastoral grounds
Nest-like, and alleys of old trees,
Until at last, in lawny ease,
Down by a garden and its fountains,
In the ken of mild blue mountains,

Rose, as if exempt from death,
Its many-centuried household breath.
The stone-cut arms above the door
Were such as earliest chieftains bore,
Of simple gear, long laid aside;
And low it was, and warm and wide,—
A home to love, from sire to son,
By white-grown servants waited on.
Here a door opening breath'd of bowers
Of ladies, who lead lives of flowers;
There, walls were books; and the sweet witch,
Painting, had there the rooms made rich
With knights, and dames, and loving eyes
Of heav'n-gone kindred, sweet and wise;
Of bishops, gentle as their lawn,
And sires, whose talk was one May-dawn.
Last, on the roof, a clock's old grace
Look'd forth, like some enchanted face
That never slept, but in the night
Dinted the air with thoughtful might
Of sudden tongue which seem'd to say,
"The stars are firm, and hold their way."

Behold me now, like knight indeed,
Whose balmed wound had ceas'd to bleed,
Behold me in this green domain
Leading a palfrey by the rein,
On which the fairy lady sat
In magic talk, which men call "chat,"
Over mead, up hill, down dale,
While the sweet thoughts never fail,
Bright as what we pluck'd 'twixt whiles,
The mountain-ash's thick red smiles;
And aye she laugh'd, and talk'd, and rode,
And to blest eyes her visions show'd
Of nook, and tow'r, and mountain rare,
Like bosom, making mild the air;
And seats, endear'd by friend and sire,
Facing sunset's thoughtful fire.

And then, to make romances true,
Before this lady open flew
A garden gate; and lo! right in,
Where horse's foot had never been,
Rode she! the gard'ner with a stare
To see her threat his lilies fair,
Uncapp'd his bent old silver hair,
And seem'd to say, "My lady good
Makes all things right in her sweet mood."

O land of Druid and of Bard,
Worthy of bearded Time's regard,
Quick-blooded, light-voiced, lyric Wales,
Proud with mountains, rich with vales,
And of such valour that in thee
Was born a third of chivalry.
(And is to come again, they say,
Blowing its trumpets into day,
With sudden earthquake from the ground,
And in the midst, great Arthur crown'd,)
I used to think of thee and thine
As one of an old faded line
Living in his hills apart,
Whose pride I knew, but not his heart:
But now that I have seen thy face,
Thy fields, and ever youthful race,
And women's lips of rosiest word
(So rich they open), and have heard
The harp still leaping in thy halls,
Quenchless as the waterfalls,
I know thee full of pulse as strong
As the sea's more ancient song,
And of a sympathy as wide;
And all this truth, and more beside,
I should have known, had I but seen,
O Flint, thy little shore; and been
Where Truth and Dream walk, hand-in-hand,
Bodryddan's living Fairy-land.

A NIGHT-RAIN IN SUMMER.

June 28, 1834.

Open the window, and let the air
Freshly blow upon face and hair,
And fill the room, as it fills the night,
With the breath of the rain's sweet might.
Hark! the burthen, swift and prone!
And how the odorous limes are blown!
Stormy Love's abroad, and keeps
Hopeful coil for gentle sleeps.

Not a blink shall burn to-night
In my chamber, of sordid light;
Nought will I have, not a window-pane,
'Twixt me and the air and the great good rain,
Which ever shall sing me sharp lullabies;
And God's own darkness shall close mine eyes;
And I will sleep, with all things blest,
In the pure earth-shadow of natural rest.

CALVIULTOR.[149]

WRITTEN IN THE PERSON OF A BALD MAN.

I've got my wig:—and now, thou rash Hirsutus,
Crinitus, Whiskerandos, Ogre, Bear,
Or whatsoever title please thine hair,
Why vex the bald? Why loveless thus repute us?
Sweet Shakspeare, *omni nectare imbutus*,
Was bald; and he, the wise beyond compare,
Socrates, teacher of the young and fair;
And Cæsar, victim of a *natural* Brutus!

Fresh is the bald man's head; for love so apt,
That England's gallants, in her wittiest time,
In voluntary baldness, velvet-capp'd,
Through reams of letters urg'd their amorous rhyme:
Then issued forth, peruk'd: and o'er their shoulders
From every curl shook loves at all their fair beholders.

TO THE QUEEN.

AN OFFERING OF GRATITUDE ON HER MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY.

THE lark dwells lowly, Madam,—on the ground,—
And yet his song within the heavens is found:
The basest heel may wound him ere he rise,
But soar he must, for love exalts his eyes.
Though poor, his heart must loftily be spent,
And he sings free, crown'd with the firmament.

A poet thus (if love and later fame
May warrant him to wear that sacred name)
Hoped, in some pause of birth-day pomp and power,
His carol might have reach'd the Sovereign's bower;
Voice of a heart twice touch'd; once in its need,
Once by a kind word, exquisite indeed:
But Care, ungrateful to a host that long
Had borne him kindly, came and marr'd his song,
Marr'd it, and stopp'd, and in his envious soul
Dreamt it had ceas'd outright, and perish'd whole.
Dull god! to know not, after all he knew,
What the best gods, Patience and Love, can do.
The song was lamed, was lated, yet the bird
High by the lady's bower has still been heard,
Thanking that balm in need, and that delightful word.
Blest be the queen! Blest when the sun goes down;
When rises, blest. May love line soft her crown.
May music's self not more harmonious be,
Than the mild manhood by her side and she.
May she be young forever—ride, dance, sing,
'Twixt cares of state carelessly carolling,
And set all fashions healthy, blithe, and wise,
From whence good mothers and glad offspring rise.
May everybody love her. May she be
As brave as will, yet soft as charity;
And on her coins be never laurel seen,
But only those fair peaceful locks serene,
Beneath whose waving grace first mingle now
The ripe Guelph cheek and good straight Coburgh brow,

Pleasure and reason! May she, every day,
See some new good winning its gentle way
By means of mild and unforbidden men!
And when the sword hath bow'd beneath the pen,
May her own line a patriarch scene unfold,
As far surpassing what these days behold
E'en in the thunderous gods, iron and steam,
As they the sceptic's doubt, or wild man's dream!
And to this end—oh! to this Christian end,
And the sure coming of its next great friend,
May her own soul, this instant, while I sing,
Be smiling, as beneath some angel's wing,
O'er the dear life in life, the small, sweet, new,
Unselfish self, the filial self of two,
Bliss of her future eyes, her pillow'd gaze,
On whom a mother's heart thinks close, and prays.

Your beadsman, Madam, thus, "in spite of sorrow,"
Bids at your window, like the lark, good morrow.

TO THE INFANT PRINCESS ROYAL.

Welcome, bud beside the rose,
On whose stem our safety grows;
Welcome, little Saxon Guelph;
Welcome for thine own small self;
Welcome for thy father, mother,
Proud the one and safe the other;
Welcome to three kingdoms; nay,
Such is thy potential day,
Welcome, little mighty birth,
To our human star the earth.

Some have wish'd thee boy; and some
Gladly wait till boy shall come,
Counting it a genial sign
When a lady leads the line.
What imports it, girl or boy?
England's old historic joy

Well might be content to see
Queens alone come after thee,—
Twenty visions of thy mother
Following sceptred, each the other,
Linking with their roses white
Ages of unborn delight.
What imports it who shall lead,
So that the good line succeed?
So that love and peace feel sure
Of old hate's discomfiture?
Thee appearing by the rose
Safety comes, and peril goes;
Thee appearing, earth's new spring
Fears no winter's "grisly king;"
Hope anew leaps up, and dances
In the hearts of human chances:
France, the brave, but too quick-blooded,
Wisely has her threat re-studied;
England now, as safe as she
From the strifes that need not be,
And the realms thus hush'd and still,
Earth with fragrant thought may fill,
Growing harvests of all good,
Day by day, as planet should,
Till it clap its hands, and cry,
Hail, matur'd humanity!
Earth has outgrown want and war;
Earth is now no childish star.

But behold, where thou dost lie,
Heeding nought, remote or nigh!
Nought of all the news we sing
Dost thou know, sweet ignorant thing;
Nought of planet's love, nor people's:
Nor dost hear the giddy steeples
Carolling of thee and thine,
As if heav'n had rain'd them wine;
Nor dost care for all the pains
Of ushers and of chamberlains,

Nor the doctor's learned looks,
Nor the very bishop's books,
Nor the lace that wraps thy chin,
No, nor for thy rank, a pin.
E'en thy father's loving hand
Nowise dost thou understand,
When he makes thee feebly grasp
His finger with a tiny clasp;
Nor dost know thy very mother's
Balmy bosom from another's,
Though thy small blind lips pursue it,
Nor the arms that draw thee to it,
Nor the eyes, that, while they fold thee,
Never can enough behold thee.
Mother true and good has she,
Little strong one, been to thee,
Nor with listless in-door ways
Weaken'd thee for future days;
But has done her strenuous duty
To thy brain and to thy beauty,
Till thou cam'st, a blossom bright,
Worth the kiss of air and light;
To thy healthy self a pleasure;
To the world a balm and treasure.

THREE VISIONS,

OCCASIONED BY THE BIRTH AND CHRISTENING OF THE PRINCE OF WALES.

O LOVE of thanks for gentle deeds,
O sympathy with lowly needs,
O claims of care, and balms of song,
I fear'd ye meant to do me wrong,
And let me fade with stifled heart,
Ere time and I had leave to part;
But waking lately in the morn,
Just as a golden day was born,
Lo the dull clouds, by sickness wrought,
Began to break on heights of thought,

And fresh from out the Muse's sky
Three visions of a Queen had I;
Three in auspicious link benign;
One dear, one gorgeous, one divine!
The first—(and let no spirit dare
That vision with my soul to share,
But such as know that angels spread
Their wings above a mother's bed)—
The first disclos'd her where she lay
In pillow'd ease, that blessed day,
Which just had made her pale with joy
Of the wish'd-for, princely boy,
Come to complete, and stamp with man,
The line which gentler grace began.
See, how they smooth her brows to rest,
Faint, meek, yet proud, and wholly blest;
And how she may not speak the while
But only sigh, and only smile,
And press his pressing hand who vies
In bliss with her beloved eyes.

Vanish'd that still and sacred room;
And round me, like a pomp in bloom,
Was a proud chapel, heavenly bright
With lucid glooms of painted light
Hushing the thought with holy story,
And flags that hung asleep in glory,
And scutcheons of emblazon bold,
The flowers of trees of memories old.
And living human flowers were there,
New colouring the angelic air;
Young beauties mix'd with warriors gray,
And choristers in lily array,
And princes, and the genial king
With the wise companioning,[150]
And the mild manhood, by whose side
Walks daily forth his two years' bride,
And she herself, the rose of all,
Who wears the world's first coronal,—

She, lately in that bower of bliss,
How simple and how still to this!
Forever and anon there roll'd
The gusty organ manifold,
Like a golden gate of heaven
On its hinges angel-driven
To let through a storm and weight
Of its throne's consenting's state;
Till the dreadful grace withdrew
Into breath serene as dew,
Comforting the ascending hymn
With notes of softest seraphim.
Then was call on Jesus mild;
And in the midst that new-born child
Was laid within the lap of faith,
While his prayer the churchman saith,
And gifted with two loving names—
One the heir of warlike fames,
And one befitting sage new line
Against the world grow more benign.[151]

Like a bubble, children-blown,
Then was all that splendour flown;
And in a window by the light
Of the gentle moon at night,
Talking with her love apart
And her own o'erflowing heart,
That queen and mother did I see
Too happy for tranquillity;
Too generous-happy to endure
The thought of all the woful poor
Who that same night laid down their heads
In mockeries of starving beds,
In cold, in wet, disease, despair,
In madness that will say no prayer;
With wailing infants, some; and some
By whom the little clay lies dumb;
And some, whom feeble love's excess,
Through terror, tempts to murderousness.

And at that thought the big drops rose
In pity for her people's woes;
And this glad mother and great queen
Weeping for the poor was seen,
And vowing in her princely will
That they should thrive and bless her still.

And of these three fair sights of mine,
That was the vision most divine.

LINES

ON THE BIRTH OF THE PRINCESS ALICE.

Though the laurel's courtly bough
Boast again its poet now,
One with verse, too, calm and stately,
Fit to sing of greatness greatly,[152]
Granted yet be one last rhyme
To the muse that sang meantime,
If for nought but to make known
That she sang for love alone;
That she sang from out a heart
Used to play no sordid part;
That howe'er a hope might rise,
Strange to her unprosperous eyes,
Ere the cloud came in between
All sweet harvests and their queen,
Still the faith was not the fee
Nor gratitude expectancy.
Oh! the soul that never thought
Meanly, when a throne it fought,
Was it not as far above
All that's mean, with one to love?

Welcome then, fair new delight,
Welcome to thy fathers sight,
Welcome to thy sister, brother,
And thy sweet strong-hearted mother,

(Faithful to all duties she
That could prosper them and thee;)
Welcome, playmate of them all,
Future grace of bower and hall,
Queen perchance of some great land
Whose kisses wait thy little hand.
Thou art come in right good time,
With the sweetest of the prime,
With the green trees and the flowers,
Orchard blooms and sunny showers,
And the cuckoo and the bee,
And lark's angelic ecstasy,
And the bird that speaks delight
Into the close ear of night.

What a world, were human kind
All of one instructed mind!
What a world to rule, to please,
To share 'twixt enterprise and ease!
Graceful manners flowing round
From the court's enchanted ground,
Comfort keeping all secure,
None too rich, and none too poor.

Thee, meantime, fair child of one,
Fit to see that golden sun,
Thee may no worse lot befall
Than a long life, April all;
Fuller, much, of hopes than fears,
Kind in smiles and kind in tears,
Graceful, cheerful, ever new,
Heaven and earth both kept in view,
While the poor look up and bless
Thy celestial bounteousness.
And, when all thy days are done,
And sadness views thy setting sun,
Mayst thou greet thy mother's eyes,
And endless May in Paradise.

RIGHT AND MIGHT.

ON BEING ASKED WHETHER I THOUGHT THAT MIGHT WAS RIGHT.

THUS far I do:—that Right of Might
Springs but from something *per se* right,—
Some health, strength, knowledge. To beat might,
You must fight might with righter right.

But suppose might an infant smite,
Would you call that a right of might?
Yes; of the madman's teeth to bite.
'Tis you, O world, must set that right
With the great Might of Love and Light.

DREAM WITHIN DREAM;

OR,

A DREAM IN HEAVEN;

OR,

EVIL MINIMIZED.

WHAT evil would be, could it be, the Blest
Are sometimes fain to know. They sink to rest,
Dream for a moment's space of care and strife,
Wake, stare, and smile, and *that* was human Life.[153]

MORGIANA IN ENGLAND.

AIR—*The Deil cam fiddling through the town.*

1815.

OH, one that I know is a knavish lass,
Though she looks so sweet and simple,
Her eyes there are none can safely pass,
And it's wrong to trust her dimple.
So taking the jade was by Nature made,
So finish'd in all fine thieving,
She'll e'en look away what you wanted to say,
And smile you out of your grieving.

To see her, for instance, go down a dance,
You'd think you sat securely,
Although she forewarns by no bold advance,
And by nothing done over demurely:
But Lord! she goes with so blithe a repose,
And comes so shapely about you,
That ere you're aware, with a glance and an air
She whisks your heart from out you.

ODE TO THE SUN.

THE main object of this poem is to impress the beautiful and animating fact, that the greatest visible agent in our universe, the Sun, is also one of the most beneficent; and thus to lead to the inference, that spiritual greatness and goodness are in like proportion, and its Maker beneficence itself, through whatever apparent inconsistencies he may work. The Sun is at once the greatest Might and Right that we behold.

A secondary intention of the poem is to admonish the carelessness with which people in general regard the divinest wonders of the creation, in consequence of being used to their society—this great and glorious mystery, the Sun, not excepted. "Familiarity," it is said, "breeds contempt." To which somebody emphatically added—"With the contemptible." I am far from meaning to say that all who behold the Sun with too little thought are contemptible. Habit does strange things, even with the most reflecting. But of this I am sure, that in proportion as anybody wishes to prove himself worthy of his familiarity with great objects, he will not be sorry to be reminded of their greatness, especially as reverence need not diminish delight; for a heavenly "Father" can no more desire the admiration of him to be oppressive to us, than an earthly one; else fatherliness would be unfatherly, and sunshine itself a gloom.

When the Florentines crowded to some lectures of Galileo, because they were on a comet which had just made its appearance, the philosopher was bold enough to rebuke them for showing such a childish desire to hear him on this particular subject, when they were in the habit of neglecting the marvels of creation which daily presented themselves to their eyes.

PRESENCE divine! Great lord of this our sphere!
Bringer of light, and life, and joy, and beauty,—
God midst a million gods, that far and near
Hold each his orbs in rounds of rapturous duty;[154]
Oh never may I, while I lift this brow,
Believe in any god *less* like a god than thou.

Thou art the mightiest of all things we see,
And thou, the mightiest, art amongst the kindest;
The planets, dreadfully and easily,
About thee, as in sacred sport, thou windest;
And thine illustrious hands, for all that power,
Light soft on the babe's cheek, and nurse the budding flower.

They say that in thine orb is movement dire,
Tempest and flame, as on a million oceans:
Well may it be, thou heart of heavenly fire;
Such looks and smiles befit a god's emotions;
We know thee gentle in the midst of all,
By those smooth orbs in heaven, this sweet fruit on the wall.

I feel thee here, myself, soft on my hand;
Around me is thy mute, celestial presence;
Reverence and awe would make me fear to stand
Within thy beam, were not all Good its essence:
Were not all Good its essence, and from thence
All good, glad heart deriv'd, and child-like confidence.

I know that there is Fear, and Grief, and Pain,
Strange foes, though stranger guardian friends, of Pleasure:
I know that poor men lose, and rich men gain,
Though oft th' unseen adjusts the seeming measure:
I know that Guile may teach, while Truth must bow,
Or bear contempt and shame on his benignant brow.

But while thou sitt'st, mightier than all, O Sun,
And e'en when sharpest felt, still throned in kindness,
I see that greatest and that best are one,
And that all else works tow'rds it, though in blindness
Evil I see, and Fear, and Grief, and Pain,
Work under Good their lord, embodied in thy reign.

I see the molten gold darkly refine
O'er the great sea of human joy and sorrow;
I hear the deep voice of a grief divine
Calling sweet notes to some diviner morrow;
And though I know not how the two may part,
I feel thy rays, O Sun, write it upon my heart.

Upon my heart thou writest it, as thou,
Heart of these worlds, art writ on by a greater:
Beam'd on with love from some still mightier brow,
Perhaps by that which waits some new relator;
Some amaz'd man, who sees new splendours driven
Thick round a Sun of suns, and fears he looks at heaven.[155]

'Tis easy for vain man, Time's growing child,
To dare pronounce on thy material seeming:
Heav'n, for its own good ends, is mute and mild
To many a wrong of man's presumptuous dreaming.
Matter, or mind, of either what knows he?
Or how with more than both thine orb divine may be?

Art thou a god indeed? or thyself heaven?
And do we taste thee here in light and flowers?
Art thou the first sweet place, where hearts, made even,
Sing tender songs in earth-remembering bowers?
Enough, my soul. Enough through thee, O Sun,
To learn the sure good song,—Greatest and Best are one.

Enough for man to work, to hope, to love,
Copying thy zeal untir'd, thy smile unscorning:
Glad to see gods thick as the stars above,
Bright with the God of gods' eternal morning;
Round about whom perchance endless they go,
Ripening their earths to heavens, as love and wisdom grow.

A BLESSED SPOT.

FROM AN EPIGRAM OF ABOUFADHEL AHMED, SURNAMED AL HAMADAIN, RECORDED IN D'HERBELOT.

Hamadan is my native place;
And I must say, in praise of it,
It merits, for its ugly face,
What everybody says of it.

Its children equal its old men
In vices and avidity,
And they reflect the babes again
In exquisite stupidity.

VERSES ON A FULL FLOWING PERUKE,

BY RICHARD HONEYCOMB, ESQ.

1673.

Did ever laurel, famed in story,
Cover a man with so much glory,
Or warrant him to look so big,
As that great modern boast, a wig?
Some Roman ladies wore a front
With hyperbolic friz upon't;
And we are told of Goths and Scythians
With wigs; but their's were short and pithy ones.
None of the ancients, as I see,
Laid claim to our crinosity,
Or took the breath of the beholders
With hairy torrents down the shoulders,
Melting a dozen scalps in one,
Enough to make a lion run.

The monarch, whose inglorious look
(Having a natural-born peruke)
Gave rise to this great capillation,
Ill treateth sure his gallant nation,
And takes too many pains by far
In seeking such renown in war,
Picking for 's head superfluous laurels
In shape of Dutch and Spanish quarrels,
When he must know, that he who claps
Two yards of goat's-hair at his chaps,
Succeeds at once to all the rights
And privileges o' the greatest knights,
Reaping such honours from the dead
As never yet invested head,
And may dispense with wit and parts
In vanquishing the ladies' hearts.
To have a little reading, once
Might mark a gallant from a dunce;
Some grammar did not come amiss,
And wit could much exalt a kiss:

But now your man is he who saddles
His head with the great'st hairy straddles,
And all that sep'rates wits from ninnies,
Is, "Did your wig cost fifty guineas?"

Hail, two-tail'd comet of this age,
Portending bills, and amorous rage!
Hail, brains of beaux turn'd inside out
Tossing your scented froth about,
And turning brisk on the beholders
With copied airs across the shoulders!
Through thee we come at beauty's blushes,
Like Jove through clouds, or Pan through bushes:
To thee I owe (besides, I fear,
Some hundreds to my perruquier;)
To thee I owe my Chloe's passion,
Her fears, and fond incarceration;
And more than all, I owe to thee
That Jack Hall's wig has set me free.

DOGGREL ON DOUBLE COLUMNS AND LARGE TYPE.

Be present, ye home Truths and Graces,
That throw a charm on commonplaces,
And make a street or an old door
Look as it never look'd before,
Nay, doggrel's very self refine
Into a bark not quite canine
(Rather, a voice that once those fairies
Took delight in, call'd the Lares;
Fire-side gods, that used to sit
Loving jolly dogs and wit;)[156]
For with a truth on our own part,
Which, though it frisketh, is at heart
The solemnest of all the solemns,
We sing, imprimis, Double Columns;
And secondly, our noble Type,
Beauteous as Raphael, clear as Cuyp.

Double Columns, in all places,
Are always cause of double graces;
They grace one's front, and grace one's wings,
And do all sorts of graceful things,
Making a welcome fit for queens;
But most of all in magazines.

Look at the fact. All monthly publi-
Cations that have been column'd doubly,
Have always hit the public fancy
Better, and with more poignancy
Than your platter-fac'd, broad pages;
Witness things that liv'd for ages,—
London Magazines, and *Towns*
And Countrys, of charade renowns;
The old *Monthly*, still surviving
Though with single life now striving;
And the old *Gentleman's* (why also
Should *he* change, and risk a fall so?)
Truly old gentleman was he,
And liv'd to hail the century,
Although his diet was no better
Than an old tombstone or dead letter.
Then look at *Blackwood*, look at *Fraser;*
To them and *their* sales what d'ye say, Sir?
Tories, I own; the more's the pity;
But double-column'd, and therefore witty:
For columns (quoth th' Horatian fiddling)
Don't permit people to be middling.[157]
The *Dublin University*
Might also spell his name with *g*,—
With *o* and *g*, and call himself
The *Doubling*,—therefore fit for shelf;
A clever dog; though he, too, beats
His Dublin drum with Toryous heats.
Tait, lastly, hath his columns double,
Though he began (which gave him trouble)
With single ones. I warn'd him of it,
And now, you see, he owns me prophet.

Lucky for Tait;—because I prophesied
Also, that wealth would thus be *of*-his-side.
I only wish his columns were of
Narrower edifice; since thereof
Greater snugness comes, and easiness
Of reading, which is half the business.

Oh, nothing like your double columns!
Notions of single ones are all hums.
Compare a single one with any
Two that you see, how like a zany
It looks; how poor, inept, inhuman!
Oh, ever while you live, have two, man;
Two, like two legs; and don't be branding
With love of *one* your *understanding*.
Fancy a *door* with one provided!
How ludicrous! one-legged! lop-sided;
Whereas with two, like tit for tat,
Pediment, cornice, and all that,
It stands like something worth looking at,
Or a stout fellow in a cock'd hat.
See our own door-way, at page one;
There's fitness for a Parthenon!
Two columns, bearing that first story
Of strong and sweet Repository.
Will any man who hates a flat style,
Or a forc'd, object to that style?
Will Mr. Gwilt, or Mr. Barry,
Or Mr. What's-his-name? No, marry.
Our front demands them to be stout;
So no pun, pray, on the word *gout*.
Turn but the corner, and look *there;*
There see our columns mount in air,
So smooth, and sweet, and with a smile,
Air seems itself to feel the style.
No one will say, with wondering brows,
As the man did to Carlton House,
"*Care colonne, che fate quà?*"
Nor will the columns, with *hum* and *ha*,
Say "*Non sappiamo, in verità.*"[158]
A pretty jest, 'faith, and a queer,

To ask our columns how *they* came here!
Egad, they'd say to such suggestion,
"How came *you* here, that ask the question?"

Double then be your columns, ever:
Were single ones in Nature? Never.
(There's nothing like a round assertion)
And history holds them in aversion.

All her best columns go by twos;—
Witness those pillars of the Jews,
Jachin and Boaz, which implied
That Love and Pow'r go side by side;[159]
And those which Hercules set up,
When he sat down in Spain to sup
On fame and gratitude (no dull tray)
And carv'd upon them *Ne plus ultra;*
Meaning, "You can't surpass my columns;"
Words in our favour that speak volumes.
Upon the like, deny who can,
Goes that most wondrous fabric, man,
And on two legs walks noble and steady;
But this we have touch'd upon already.
Thus emperors walk; yea, poets; yea,
My lady B. and lady A.;
Yea (not to speak it lightly) queens;
And so must wits in magazines.

In short, look at the common sense
O' the case, and frame your judgment thence.
So wide are single-column'd pages,
The eyes grow tir'd with the long stages;
At each line's end you feel perplex'd
For the beginning of the next,
And have to run back all the way
To find it, and keep saying "Eh?"
Now double ones require but glances;
From line to line the sweet eye dances,
Without a strain, or the least trouble,
And thus th' enjoyment's truly double,

Taking your meaning and your thinking,
As easily as lovers, winking.
Besides, meanwhile it has an eye to
The other column it runs nigh to;
Which doubly doubles the enjoyment,
By certainty of more employment;
Just like that terrible Greek, who reckon'd,
While courting one love, on a second;
Or as your gourmand, dining pleasantly,
Says, "I'll attack *that* pigeon presently."

So much for columns. Now for type.
What soul, of any judgment ripe,
Or wise by dint of good intentions,
But must exult in its dimensions?
What good heart swell not at a size
So very good for good old eyes?
Nay, good for eyes too not grown old,
But tried by labours manifold,
And glad not to be forc'd to take
To spectacles and vision-ache?
Young eyes, of course, can find no fault with it;
And babes that learn to spell, won't halt with it:
So that, in fact, the *only* pages
To suit all eyes and suit all ages,
And fill the whole earth's visual powers
With tears of transport, will be *ours!*
Good heav'ns! what an amazing glory!
Unknown in periodic story!

We knew once a shrewd speculator,
Young withal, and fond of *pater*,
Who in the course of a right breeding
Had got such filial views of reading,
That he projected an old men's
Newspaper, to be call'd—THE LENS;
That is to say, a glass to read it;
Because the print was *not to need it!*
(We think we see old Munden *kneading*

The word, in his intensest reading,
And counting it a gain, exceeding).
Well, here's a LENS in all its glory,
The type of the Repository;—
A glass, without a glass's need;—
A print, that cries to all "Come, read!"
How pleasant to reverse, for once,
The cares that patronise good sons,
And give good sons occasion rather
To *filiatronize* their father.

There's a strange tale of an old sire,
Who screaming every moment higher,
Came running from a house, or rather
Hobbling, and follow'd by *his* father,
Who was belabouring him, because
Forgetful of all filial laws,
"Th' ungracious boy," like a drawcansir,
Had laid a stick upon his *grandsire!!*

Observe our sweet Repository,
How 'twill reverse this horrid story.
For sure as we see future ages
Rise, like May-mornings, o'er our pages,
We see full many a grateful sire,
Old as *that* grandson, but all fire,
Come smiling from his home, and telling
The neighbours round about the dwelling,
How he had left, with eyes all glistening,
His father to *his grandsire* listening,
Who taking up our magazine,
And putting his white locks serene
Pleasantly back, and looking proud,
Read it, upon the spot, out loud

What need to add another syllable?
Hearts, that could stand this, are unkillable.

THE ROYAL LINE.

[1836?]

William I. The sturdy Conq'ror, politic, severe;
William II. Light-minded Rufus, dying like the deer;
Henry I. Beau-clerc, who everything but virtue knew;
Stephen. Stephen, who graced the lawless sword he drew;
Henry II. Fine Henry, hapless in his sons and priest;
Richard I. Richard, the glorious trifler in the East;
John. John, the mean wretch, tyrant and slave, a liar;
Henry III. Imbecile Henry, worthy of his sire;
Edward I. Long-shanks, well nam'd, a great encroacher he;
Edward II. Edward the minion dying dreadfully;
Edward III. The splendid veteran, weak in his decline;
Richard II. Another minion, sure untimely sign;
Henry IV. Usurping Lancaster, whom wrongs advance;
Henry V. Harry the Fifth, the tennis-boy of France;
Henry VI. The beadsman, praying while his Margaret fought;
Edward IV. Edward, too sensual for a kindly thought;
Edward V. The little head, that never wore the crown;
Richard III. Crookback, to nature giving frown for frown;
Henry VII. Close-hearted Henry, the shrewd carking sire;
Henry VIII. The British Bluebeard, fat, and full of ire;
Edward VI. The sickly boy, endowing and endow'd;
Mary. Ill Mary, lighting many a living shroud;
Elizabeth. The lion-queen, with her stiff muslin mane;
James I. The shambling pedant, and his minion train;
Charles I. Weak Charles, the victim of the dawn of right;
Cromwell. Cromwell, misuser of his home-spun might;
Charles II. The swarthy scape-grace, all for ease and wit;
James II. The bigot out of season, forc'd to quit;
William III. The Dutchman, call'd to see our vessel through;
Anne. Anna made great by conquering Marlborough;
George I. George, vulgar soul, a woman-hated name;
George II. Another, fonder of his fee than fame;
George III. A third, too weak, instead of strong, to swerve;
George IV. And fourth, whom Canning and Sir Will preserve.

Translations.

REAPPEARANCE OF ACHILLES ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE AFTER HIS LONG ABSENCE.

FROM HOMER.

Αυταρ Αχαιοι
Θεσπεσιω αλαλητω ὑφ' Ἑκτορος ανδροφονοιο
Φευγοντες, κ. τ. λ.

ILIAD, lib. 18, v. 148.

AND now the Greeks, with war-cries full of doom,
Flying from underneath the slaughterer Hector,
Had reached their ships and the Hellespont; nor yet
Had they been able from the press to drag
Achilles' friend of friends, the dead Patroclus;
For men and horse, and Hector, Priam's son,
Followed him up, like the fierce strength of fire.

Thrice did great Hector drag him by the feet
Backward, and loudly shouted to the Trojans;
And thrice did the Ajaces, springy-strength'd,
Thrust him away; yet still he kept his ground,
Sure of his strength; and now and then rushed on
Into the thick, and now and then stood still,
Shouting great shouts;—and not an inch gave he.
And as night-watching shepherds in the fields
Find all their efforts vain to drive away
A starved and fiery lion from a carcase;
So found the two great-helmed chiefs, to scare
Hector, the son of Priam, from the dead.

And now he would have dragged him off, and gained
Unspeakable praise, had not wind-footed Iris,
Bearing a secret message from Heaven's queen,

Come sweeping from Olympus' top to bid
Achilles arm him. Close to him she shot,
And thus accosted him in winged words:—

"Up, thou most overwhelming of mankind,
Pelides:—There's a dreadful roar of men
For thy friend's body at the ships, and thou
Must rescue him. They slay each other there,
Some in their rage to rescue the dead corpse,
And some to drag it to the windy towers
Of Ilion; the illustrious Hector most.
Already does he think to fix aloft
The head on spikes, cut from the gentle neck.
Up then, nor keep thee longer:—blush to think
What shame it will be to thee, should Patroclus
Be pastime for the teeth of howling dogs,
Or one irreverent thing come to the dead."
To her the conquering-footed chief divine:—
"What god has sent thee to me, goddess Iris?"

And Iris the wind-footed thus replied:—
"Juno, the glorious bed-fellow of Jove;
Nor knows it he, the lofty-throned, nor any one
Of all that live about the snowy Olympus."

And her again addressed the swift of foot:—
"But how am I to go into the press?
They are all armed; and my dear mother bade me
Wait, till I saw her with these eyes return
With beautiful arms from Vulcan; for I know not
What other glorious armour I could wear,
Except the shield of Telamonian Ajax;
And he, I trust, crowds with the foremost, wasting
About him with his spear for dead Patroclus."

And him again wind-footed Iris thus:—
"We know full well, that others have their arms;
But do thou, nevertheless, just as thou art,
Go to the trench, and stand there, and be seen;
That from the fight the Trojans may hold back,
Awe-stricken, and the Greeks have time to breathe."

"So saying, the rapid Iris disappeared."
But up Achilles rose, the loved of heaven:
And on his powerful shoulders Pallas cast
Her bordered ægis; and about his head
She put the glory of a golden mist,
From which there burnt a fiery-flaming light.
And as when smoke goes heavenward from a town
In some far island, which its foes besiege,
Who all day long with dreadful martialness
Have poured from their own town;—soon as the sun
Has set, thick lifted fires are visible,
Which, rushing upward, make a light in the sky,
And let the neighbours know, who may perhaps
Bring help across the sea; so from the head
Of great Achilles went up an effulgence.

Upon the trench he stood, without the wall,
But mixed not with the Greeks, for he revered
His mother's word; and thus so, standing there,
He shouted: and Minerva, to his shout,
Added a dreadful cry; and there arose
Among the Trojans an unspeakable tumult.
And as the clear voice of a trumpet, blown
Against a town by spirit-withering foes,
So sprung the clear voice of Æacides.
And when they heard the brazen voice, their minds
Were all awakened; and the proud-maned horses
Ran with the chariots round, for they foresaw
Calamity; and the charioteers were smitten,
When they beheld the ever-active fire
Upon the dreadful head of the great-minded one,
Burning; for bright-eyed Pallas made it burn.
Thrice o'er the trench divine Achilles shouted;
And thrice the Trojans and their great allies
Rolled back; and twelve of all their noblest men
Then perished, crushed by their own arms and chariots.

But from the throng the Greeks dragged forth Patroclus
Fondly, and bore him off upon his bier;
And his old comrades came about him, weeping.

Achilles joined them, pouring forth warm tears,
When he beheld his true companion stretched
Out on his funeral bed, torn with the spear;
For 'twas himself that sent him to the fight
With horse and chariot, nor received him more.

PRIAM, IN ANGUISH AT THE LOSS OF HECTOR, AND GETTING READY TO GO AND RANSOM THE BODY, VENTS HIS TEMPER ON HIS SUBJECTS AND CHILDREN.

FROM THE SAME.

Ερρετε, λωβητηρες, ελεγχεες' ου νυ και 'υμιν
Οικοι ενεστι γοος, 'οτι μ' ηλθετε κηδησοντες;
ILIAD, lib. 24, v. 239.

"OFF, with a plague, you scandalous multitude,
Convicted knaves, have you not groans enough
At home, that thus you come oppressing me?
Or am I mocked, because Saturnian Jove
Has smitten me, and taken my best boy?
But ye shall feel, yourselves; for ye will be
Much easier for the Greeks to rage among
Now he is gone; but I, before I see
That time, and Troy laid waste and trampled on,
Shall have gone down into the darksome house."

So saying, with his stick he drove them off,
And they went out, the old man urged them so.
And he called out in anger to his sons,
To Helenus, and Paris, god-like Agathon,
And Pammon, and Antiphonus, and Polites,
Loud in the tumult, and Deiphobus,
Hippothous, and the admirable Dius:—
These nine he gave his orders to, in anger:—

"Be quicker, do, and help me, evil children,
Down-looking set! Would ye had all been killed,
Instead of Hector, at the ships. Oh me!

Curs'd creature that I am! I had brave sons,
Here in wide Troy, and now I cannot say
That one is left me,—Mestor like a god,
And Troilus, my fine-hearted charioteer,
And Hector, who, for mortal, was a god,
For he seemed born, not of a mortal man,
But of a god; yet Mars has swept them all;
And none but these convicted knaves are left me,
Liars and dancers, excellent time-beaters,
Notorious pilferers of lambs and goats!
Why don't ye get the chariot ready, and set
The things upon it here, that we may go?"

He said; and the young men took his rebuke
With awe, and brought the rolling chariot forth.

PRIAM AT THE FEET OF ACHILLES.

FROM THE SAME.

Ὡς αρα Φωνησας απεβη προς μακρον Ολυμπον
Ἑρμειας· Πριαμος δ' εξιππων αλτο χαμαζε.
ILIAD, lib. 24, v. 468.

So saying, Mercury vanished up to heaven.
And Priam then alighted from the chariot,
Leaving Idœus with it, who remained
Holding the mules and horses; and the old man
Went straight in-doors, where the beloved of Jove,
Achilles sat, and found him there within.
The household sat apart; and two alone,
The hero Automedon, and Alcimus,
A branch of Mars, stood by him. They had been
At meals, and had not yet removed the board.
Great Priam came, without their seeing him,
And kneeling down, he grasped Achilles' knees,
And kissed those terrible hands, man-slaughtering,
Which had deprived him of so many sons.
And as a man, who is pressed heavily
For having slain another, flies away

To foreign lands, and comes into the house
Of some great man, and is beheld with wonder;
So did Achilles wonder, to see Priam;
And the rest wondered, looking at each other.
But Priam, praying to him, spoke these words:—

"God-like Achilles, think of thine own father,
Who is, as I am, at the weary door
Of age: and though the neighbouring chiefs may vex him,
And he has none to keep his evils off,
Yet, when he hears that thou art still alive,
He gladdens inwardly; and daily hopes
To see his dear son coming back from Troy.
But I, forbidden creature! I had once
Brave sons in Troy, and now I cannot say
That one is left me. Fifty children had I,
When the Greeks came; nineteen were of one womb;
The rest my women bore me in my house.
The knees of many of these fierce Mars has loosened;
And he who had no peer, Troy's prop and theirs,
Him hast thou killed now, fighting for his country,
Hector, and for his sake am I come here
To ransom him, bringing a countless ransom.
But thou, Achilles, fear the gods, and think
Of thine own father, and have mercy on me;
For I am much more wretched, and have borne
What never mortal bore, I think, on earth,
To lift unto my mouth the hand of him
Who slew my boys."

He spoke; and there arose
Sharp longing in Achilles for his father;
And taking Priam by the hand, he gently
Put him away; for both shed tears to think
Of other times; the one, most bitter ones
For Hector, and with wilful wretchedness
Lay right before Achilles; and the other,
For his own father now, and now his friend;
And the whole house might hear them as they moaned.
But when divine Achilles had refreshed

His soul with tears, and sharp desire had left
His heart and limbs, he got up from his throne,
And raised the old man by the hand, and took
Pity on his grey head and his grey chin.

MERCURY GOING TO THE CAVE OF CALYPSO.

FROM THE SAME.

Ὡς εφατ'· ουδ' απιθησε διακτορος Αργειφοντης·
Αυτικ' επειτ' ὑπο ποσσιν εδησατο καλο πεδιλα,
Αμβροσια, χρυσεια·

Odyss. lib. 5, v. 43.

He said; and straight the herald Argicide
Beneath his feet the feathery sandals tied,
Immortal, golden, that his flight could bear
O'er seas and lands, like waftage of the air;
His rod, too, that can close the eyes of men
In balmy sleep, and open them again,
He took, and holding it in hand, went flying;
Till from Pieria's top the sea descrying,
Down to it sheer he dropp'd, and scoured away
Like the wiid gull, that fishing o'er the bay
Flaps on, with pinions dipping in the brine;
So went on the far sea the shape divine.

And now arriving at the isle, he springs
Oblique, and landing with subsided wings,
Walks to the cavern 'twixt the tall green rocks,
Where dwelt the Goddess with the lovely locks.
He paus'd; and there came on him, as he stood,
A smell of citron and of cedar wood,
That threw a perfume all about the isle;
And she within sat spinning all the while,
And sang a lovely song, that made him hark and smile.

A sylvan nook it was, grown round with trees,
Poplars and elms, and odorous cypresses,
In which all birds of ample wing, the owl
And hawk, had nests, and broad-tongued water-fowl.

The cave in front was spread with a green vine,
Whose dark round bunches almost burst with wine:
And from four springs, running a sprightly race,
Four fountains, clear and crisp, refresh'd the place;
While all about, a meadowy ground was seen,
Of violets mingling with the parsley green:
So that a stranger, though a god were he,
Might well admire it, and stand there to see;
And so admiring, there stood Mercury.

THE INFANT HERCULES AND THE SERPENTS.

FROM THEOCRITUS.

JUNO, jealous of the child which Jupiter has had by Alcmena, sends two dreadful serpents to devour the boy. The serpents come upon him, while he and his half-brother Iphiclus, the son of Amphitryon, are sleeping together. Iphiclus, the child of the mortal father, is terrified: Hercules, the infant demi-god, seizes and destroys them, as if they were living playthings. His mother consults the prophet Tiresias on the occasion, and is told of her son's future renown.

YOUNG Hercules had now beheld the light
Only ten months, when once upon a night,
Alcmena, having wash'd and given the breast
To both her heavy boys, laid them to rest.
Their cradle was a noble shield of brass,
Won by her lord from slaughtered Pterelas.
Gently she laid them down, and gently laid
Her hand on both their heads, and yearn'd, and said,
"Sleep, sleep, my boys, a light and pleasant sleep,
My little souls, my twins, my guard and keep!
Sleep happy, and wake happy!" and she kept
Rocking the mighty buckler, and they slept.

At midnight, when the Bear went down and broad
Orion's shoulder lit the starry road,
There came, careering through the opening halls,
On livid spires, two dreadful animals—
Serpents; whom Juno, threatening as she drove,
Had sent there to devour the boy of Jove.

Orbing their blood-fed bellies in and out,
They tower'd along; and as they look'd about,
An evil fire out of their eyes came lamping;
A heavy poison dropt about their champing.

And now they have arriv'd, and think to fall
To their dread meal, when lo! (for Jove sees all)
The house is lit, as with the morning's break,
And the dear children of Alcmena wake.
The younger one, as soon as he beheld
The evil creatures coming on the shield,
And saw their loathsome teeth, began to cry
And shriek, and kick away the clothes, and try
All his poor little instincts of escape;
The other, grappling, seized them by the nape
Of either poisonous neck, for all their twists,
And held, like iron, in his little fists.
Buckled and bound he held them, struggling wild;
And so they wound about the boy, the child,
The long-begetting boy, the suckling dear,
That never teased his nurses with a tear.

Tir'd out at length, they trail their spires and gasp,
Lock'd in that young indissoluble grasp.

Alcmena heard the noise, and "Wake," she cried,
"Amphitryon, wake; for terror holds me tied!
Up; stay not for the sandals: hark! the child,
The youngest—how he shrieks! The babe is wild:
And see, the walls and windows! 'Tis as light
As if 'twere day, and yet 'tis surely night.
There's something dreadful in the house; there is
Indeed, dear husband!" He arose at this;
And seiz'd his noble sword, which overhead
Was always hanging at the cedar-bed:
The hilt he grasp'd in one hand, and the sheath
In t'other; and drew forth the blade of death.

All in an instant, like a stroke of doom,
Returning midnight smote upon the room.

Amphitryon call'd; and woke from heavy sleep
His household, who lay breathing hard and deep;
" Bring lights here from the hearth! lights, lights; and guard
The doorways; rise, ye ready labourers hard!"

He said; and lights came pouring in, and all
The busy house was up, in bower and hall;
But when they saw the little suckler, how
He grasp'd the monsters, and with earnest brow
Kept beating them together, plaything-wise,
They shriek'd aloud; but he with laughing eyes,
Soon as he saw Amphitryon, leap'd and sprung
Childlike, and at his feet the dead disturbers flung.

Then did Alcmena to her bosom take
Her feebler boy, who could not cease to shake.
The other son, Amphitryon took and laid
Beneath a fleece; and so return'd to bed.

Soon as the cock with his thrice-echoing cheer,
Told that the gladness of the day was near,
Alcmena sent for old, truth-uttering
Tiresias; and she told him all this thing,
And bade him say what she might think and do;
" Nor do thou fear," said she, " to let me know,
Although the mighty gods should meditate
Aught ill; for man can never fly from Fate.
And thus thou seest" (and here her smiling eyes
Look'd through a blush) " how well I teach the wise."

So spoke the queen. Then he with glad old tone;
" Be of good heart, thou blessed bearing one,
True blood of Perseus; for by my sweet sight,
Which once divided these poor lids with light,
Many Greek women, as they sit and weave
The gentle thread across their knees at eve,
Shall sing of thee and thy beloved name;
Thou shalt be blest by every Argive dame:

For unto this thy son it shall be given,
With his broad heart to win his way to heaven;
Twelve labours shall he work; and all accurst
And brutal things o'erthrow, brute men the worst;
And in Trachinia shall the funeral pyre
Purge his mortalities away with fire;
And he shall mount amid the stars and be
Acknowledg'd kin to those who envied thee,
And sent these den-born shapes to crush his destiny."

THE SYRACUSAN GOSSIPS;

OR, THE FEAST OF ADONIS.[160]

FROM THE SAME.

GORGO, EUNOE, PRAXINOE, LITTLE BOY, OLD WOMAN, AND TWO MEN.

SCENE.—*At Alexandria, in Egypt.*

TIME.—*During the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, between two and three hundred years before the Christian Era.*

Gor. Praxinoe within?
Eun. Why Gorgo, dear,
How late you are! Yes, she's within.
Prax. What no!
And so you are come at last! A seat here, Eunoe,
And set a cushion.
Eun. There is one.
Prax. Sit down.
Gor. Oh, what a thing's a spirit! Do you know
I've scarcely got alive to you, Praxinoe,
There's such a crowd, such heaps of four-horse chariots,
And creaking shoes, and military cloaks,
And then you live such an immense way off.
Prax. Why, 'twas his shabby doing; he would take
This hole that he calls house, at the world's end.
'Twas all to spite me, and to part us two.

Gor. Don't talk so of your husband, there's a dear,
Before the little one; see how he looks at you.
Prax. There, cheer up, child; cheer up, Zopyrion, sweet;
I don't mean your papa.
Gor. (*aside.*) He understands though,
By the Adorable! (*aloud.*) No, nice papa!
Prax. Well, this papa (softly, let us talk softly)
Going to buy rouge and saltpetre for us,
Comes bringing salt! The great big simpleton!
Gor. And there's my money-waster Dioclides;
He gave for five old dog's hair fleeces, yesterday,
Ten drachmas!—for mere dirt! Trash upon trash!
But come, put on your button-vest and cloak,
And let us go and see the spectacle
Of great King Ptolemy;—the Queen, they say,
Has made it a fine thing.
Prax. Ay, luck has luck.
Tell me then all you've seen and heard of it,
For I've seen nothing.
Gor. We shall not have time,
Those who've no work, have none but holidays.
Prax. Some water, Eunoe; and then, my fine one,
To take your rest again! Puss loves good lying.
Come, move, girl, move! some water,—water first.
Look how she brings it! Now then;—hold, hold, careless;
Not quite so fast, you're wetting all my gown!
There, that'll do. Now please the Gods I'm washed.
The key of the great chest; where's that? go fetch it.
Gor. Praxinoe, that plaited vest of yours
Becomes you mightily. What did it cost you?
Prax. Oh don't remind me, Gorgo;—more than one
Or two good minas,—besides time and trouble.
Gor. And yet you seemed to have forgotten it.
Prax. Ah, ha; that's true;—that's very good.—(*To Eunoe.*) Here, fetch me
My cloak and hood; and help them on now, properly.
(*To the little boy.*) Child, child, you cannot go; the horse will bite it,—
The horrid woman's coming!—Well then, well,
Cry, if you will; but you must not get lamed.

Come, Gorgo. Phrygia, take the child and play with him ;
And call the dog in doors, and lock the gate.
[*They go out.*
Powers, what a crowd ! how shall we get along !
Why, they're like ants ! countless ! immeasurable !
Well, Ptolemy, you've done fine things, that's certain,
Since the Gods took your father. No one now-a-days
Does harm to travellers, as they used to do
After the Egyptian fashion, lying in wait,—
Masters of nothing but detestable tricks,
And all alike, a set of cheats and brawlers.—
Gorgo, my sweetest friend, what will become of us ?
Here are the king's horse-guards ! Pray, my good man,
Don't tread upon me so. See the bay horse !
Look, how it rears ! It's like a great mad dog !
How you stand, Eunoe !—It will throw him certainly.
How lucky that I left the child at home !
Gor. Courage, Praxinoe ;—we're behind them now ;
They're gone into the court-yard.
Prax. And I'm well again.
I never could abide from infancy
A horse and a cold snake.
Gor. (*addressing an old woman.*) From court, mother ?
Old Wom. Yes, children.
Gor. Is it easy to get in, pray ?
Old Wom. (*passing briskly.*) The Greeks got into Troy. Every thing's done,
By trying, sweetest.
Gor. How she bustles off !
Why the old woman's quite oracular,
But women must know everything,—even how Jupiter
Took to wife Juno. See, Praxinoe,
How the gate's crowded !
Prax. Frightfully indeed !
Give me your hand, dear Gorgo ; and do you,
Hold fast of Eutychis's, Eunoe ;
Don't let her go ; don't stir an inch ; and so
We'll all squeeze in together. Stick close, Eunoe.
Oh me ! oh me ! my veil's torn right in two
Do take care, my good man, and mind my cloak.

Man. 'Twas not my fault;—but I'll take care.
Prax. What heaps!
They drive like pigs.
Man. Courage, my girl. All's safe.
Prax. Blessings upon you, Sir, now and forever,
For taking care of us.—A good, kind soul!
How Eunoe squeezes us! Do, child, make way
For your own self. There,—now we're all got in,
As the man said when he turn'd the key on his bride.
Gor. Praxinoe, do look here;—what lovely tapestry;
How fine and graceful! One would think the Gods did it.
Prax. Holy Minerva! how those artists work!
How they do paint their pictures to the life!
The figures stand so like, and move so like!
They're quite alive! not worked!—Well, certainly
Man's a wise thing. And look how wonderful,
He lies there on his silver couch, all budding
With the young down about his face;—Adonis,
Charming Adonis, charming ev'n in Acheron!
2nd Man. Do hold your tongues there,—chatter, chatter, chatter;
The turtles stun one with their yawning gabble.[161]
Gor. Hey day, whence comes the man! What is't to you,
If we do chatter? Rule where you've a right.
You don't rule Syracusans; and for that,
Our people are from Corinth, like Bellerophon.
Our tongue's Peloponnesiac; and we hope
It's lawful for the Dorians to speak Doric!
Prax. We've but one master, by the Honey-sweet![162]
And don't fear you, nor all your empty blows.
Gor. Hush, hush, Praxinoe;—there's the Grecian girl,
A most accomplished creature, going to sing
About Adonis; she that sings so well
The song of Sperchis; she'll sing something fine,
I warrant:—see, how sweetly she prepares!

THE SONG.

O lady, who dost take delight
In Golgos and the Erycian height,

And in the Italian dell,
Venus, ever amiable;
Lo, the long-expected Hours,
Slowest of the blessed powers,
Yet who bring us something ever,
Ceasing their soft dancing never,
Bring thee back thy beauteous one
From perennial Acheron.
Thou, they say, from earth hast given
Berenice place in heaven,
Dropping to her woman's heart
Ambrosia; and for this kind part,
Berenice's daughter,—she
That's Helen-like,—Arsinoe,
O thou many-named and shrined,
Is to thy Adonis kind.
He has all the fruits that now
Hang upon the timely bough:
He has green young garden-plots,
Basketed in silver pots;
Syrian scents in alabaster;
And whate'er a curious taster
Could desire, that woman make
With oil or honey, of meal cake;
And all shapes of beast or bird,
In the woods by huntsman stirred;
And a bower to shade his state
Heaped with dill, an amber weight;
And about him, Cupids flying,
Like young nightingales, that trying
Their new wings, go half afraid,
Here and there within the shade.
See the gold! The ebony see!
And the eagles in ivory,
Bearing the young Trojan up
To be filler of Jove's cup;
And the tapestry's purple heap,
Softer than the feel of sleep;—
Artists, contradict who can,
Samian or Milesian.

But another couch there is
For Adonis, close to his;
Venus has it, and with joy
Clasps again her blooming boy
With a kiss that feels no fret,
For his lips are downy yet.
Happy with her love be she,
But to-morrow morn will we
With our locks and garments flowing,
And our bosoms gently showing,
Come and take him, in a throng,
To the sea-shore with this song :—

Go, belov'd Adonis, go
Year by year thus to and fro;
Only privileged demigod;
There was no such open road
For Atrides; nor the great
Ajax, chief infuriate;
Nor for Hector, noblest once
Of his mother's twenty sons;
Nor Patroclus, nor the boy
That returned from taken Troy;
Nor those older buried bones,
Lapiths and Deucalions;
Nor Pelopians, and their boldest;
Nor Pelasgians, Greece's oldest.
Bless us then, Adonis dear;
And bring us joy another year;
Dearly hast thou come again,
And dearly shalt be welcomed then.

Gor. Praxinoe, what a blessed thing it is!
What a wise creature! what a fine sweet voice!
'Tis time to go though; for there's Dioclides
Has not yet had his dinner; and you'd best
Not come before him when he wants it much.
Farewell, Adonis dear; and come again.

GREEK PRETENDERS TO PHILOSOPHY DESCRIBED.

FROM THE ANTHOLOGY.

(The original is in similar compound words.)

LOFTY-brow-flourishers,
Nose-in-beard-wallowers,
Bag-and-beard-nourishers,
Dish-and-all-swallowers;
Old-cloak-investitors,
Barefoot-lookfashioners,
Night-private-feasteaters,
Craft-lucubrationers;
Youth-cheaters, word-catchers, vaingloryosophers,
Such are such seekers of virtue, philosophers.

CUPID SWALLOWED!

A PARAPHRASE FROM THE SAME.

T'OTHER day as I was twining
Roses, for a crown to dine in,
What, of all things, 'midst the heap
Should I light on, fast asleep,
But the little desperate elf,
The tiny traitor, Love himself!
By the wings I pinch'd him up
Like a bee, and in a cup
Of my wine I plung'd and sank him,
And what d'ye think I did?—I drank him.
'Faith, I thought him dead. Not he!
There he lives with tenfold glee;
And now this moment with his wings
I feel him tickling my heart-strings.

CATULLUS'S RETURN HOME

TO THE PENINSULA OF SIRMIO.

O BEST of all the scatter'd spots that lie
In sea or lake,—apple of landscape's eye,—

How gladly do I drop within thy nest,
With what a sigh of full contented rest,
Scarce able to believe my journey o'er,
And that these eyes behold thee safe once more!
Oh where's the luxury like the smile at heart,
When the mind, breathing, lays its load apart,—
When we come home again, tir'd out, and spread
The loosen'd limbs o'er all the wish'd-for bed;
This, this alone is worth an age of toil.
Hail, lovely Sirmio! Hail, paternal soil!
Joy, my bright waters, joy, your master's come!
Laugh, every dimple on the cheek of home!

EPITAPH ON EROTION.

FROM MARTIAL.

Underneath this greedy stone
Lies little sweet Erotion;
Whom the Fates, with hearts as cold,
Nipp'd away at six years old.
Thou, whoever thou may'st be,
That hast this small field after me,
Let the yearly rites be paid
To her little slender shade;
So shall no disease or jar
Hurt thy house, or chill thy Lar;
But this tomb here be alone,
The only melancholy stone.

THE JOVIAL PRIEST'S CONFESSION.

There is already an imitation by Mr. Huddesford of the following reverend piece of wit; and one of the passages in it beats anything in the present version. It is the beginning of the last stanza,—

Mysterious and prophetic truths
I never could unfold 'em,
Without a flagon of good wine,
And a slice of cold ham.

The translation here offered to the reader is intended to be a more literal picture of the original, and to retain more of its intermixture of a grave and churchman-like style. The original is preserved in the *Remains* of the learned Camden, who says, in his pleasant way, that "Walter de Mapes, Archdeacon of Oxford, who, in the time of King Henry the Second, filled England with his merriments, confessed his love to good liquor in this manner:"—

I DEVISE to end my days—in a tavern drinking;
May some Christian hold for me—the glass when I am shrinking;
That the Cherubim may cry—when they see me sinking,
God be merciful to a soul—of this gentleman's way of thinking.

A glass of wine amazingly—enlighteneth one's internals;
'Tis wings bedewed with nectar—that fly up to supernals;
Bottles cracked in taverns—have much the sweeter kernels
Than the sups allowed to us—in the college journals.

Every one by nature hath—a mould which he was cast in;
I happen to be one of those—who never could write fasting;
By a single little boy—I should be surpass'd in
Writing so: I'd just as lief—be buried, tomb'd and grass'd in.

Every one by nature hath—a gift too, a dotation:
I, when I make verses,—do get the inspiration
Of the very best of wine—that comes into the nation:
It maketh sermons to abound—for edification.

Just as liquor floweth good—floweth forth my lay so;
But I must moreover eat—or I could not say so;
Nought it availeth inwardly—should I write all day so;
But with God's grace after meat—I beat Ovidius Naso.

Neither is there given to me—prophetic animation,
Unless when I have eat and drank—yea, e'en to saturation;
Then in my upper story—hath Bacchus domination,
And Phœbus rusheth into me, and beggareth all relation.

SONG OF FAIRIES ROBBING AN ORCHARD.

FROM SOME LATIN VERSES IN THE OLD ENGLISH DRAMA OF "AMYNTAS, OR THE IMPOSSIBLE DOWRY."

We the Fairies, blithe and antic,
Of dimensions not gigantic,
Though the moonshine mostly keep us,
Oft in orchards frisk and peep us.

Stolen sweets are always sweeter,
Stolen kisses much completer,
Stolen looks are nice in chapels,
Stolen, stolen be your apples.

When to bed the world are bobbing,
Then's the time for orchard robbing;
Yet the fruit were scarce worth peeling
Were it not for stealing, stealing.

PLATO'S ARCHETYPAL MAN.

ACCORDING TO THE IDEA OF IT ENTERTAINED BY ARISTOTLE.

FROM THE LATIN OF MILTON.

Say, guardian goddesses of woods,
Aspects felt in solitudes,
And Memory, at whose blessed knee
The Nine, which thy dear daughters be,
Learnt of the majestic past;
And thou, that in some antre vast
Leaning afar off dost lie,
Otiose Eternity,
Keeping the tablets and decrees
Of Jove, and the ephemerides
Of the gods, and calendars
Of the ever festal stars;
Say, who was he, the sunless shade,
After whose pattern man was made;

He first, the full of ages, born
With the old pale polar morn,
Sole, yet all; first visible thought,
After which the Deity wrought?
Twin-birth with Pallas, not remain
Doth he in Jove's o'ershadow'd brain,
But though of wide communion,
Dwells apart like one alone,
And fills the wondering embrace
(Doubt it not) of size and place.
Whether, companion of the stars,
With their tenfold round he errs;
Or inhabits with his lone
Nature in the neighbouring moon;
Or sits with body-waiting souls,
Dozing by the Lethæan pools:—
Or whether, haply placed afar
In some blank region of our star,
He stalks, an unsubstantial heap,
Humanity's giant archetype;
Where a loftier bulk he rears
Than Atlas, grappler of the stars,
And through their shadow-touch'd abodes
Brings a terror to the gods.
Not the seer of him had sight,
Who found in darkness depths of light;[163]
His travell'd eyeballs saw him not
In all his mighty gulphs of thought:—
Him the farthest-footed god,
Pleiad Mercury, never showed
To any poet's wisest sight
In the silence of the night:—
News of him the Assyrian priest[164]
Found not in his sacred list,
Though he traced back old king Nine,
And Belus, elder name divine,
And Osiris, endless famed.
Not the glory, triple-named
Thrice great Hermes, though his eyes
Read the shapes of all the skies,

Left him in his sacred verse
Reveal'd to Nature's worshippers.

O Plato! and was this a dream
Of thine in bowery Academe?
Wert thou the golden tongue to tell
First of this high miracle,
And charm him to thy schools below?
O call thy poets back, if so: [165]
Back to the state thine exiles call,
Thou greatest fabler of them all;
Or follow through the self-same gate,
Thou, the founder of the state.

PAULO AND FRANCESCA.

FROM DANTE.

IN THE TRIPLE RHYME OF THE ORIGINAL.

In the fifth circle of his imaginary Hell (through which he is conducted by the spirit of Virgil), Dante sees the souls of Paris and Helen, of Semiramis, Cleopatra, Tristan, and other personages, real and fabulous, who had given way to carnal passions. Among them he observes those of two lovers, whose tragical end had afflicted the house of his friend and patron, Guido Novello da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna. He asks permission to speak with them; and out of excess of pity at the recital of their story, falls like a man struck dead.

This is the beautiful and affecting passage in Dante, on which the author of the present volume, when a young man, ventured to found the *Story of Rimini*. He introduces it in the volume for the purpose of enriching his *Stories in Verse*, for even a translation cannot hinder it from doing that. Stories are told in many ways in going from mouth to mouth; and the reader will be good enough to consider the *Story of Rimini* as a *detail of the particulars of a domestic event*, given by a young man out of the interest which he has taken in what he has heard, but with no thought of competing in point of effect, or in any other point, with the wonderful summary, in the shape of which he first heard it.

To recur to an illustration of another sort, he will add, from his *Autobiography*, that the "design" of his poem is "altogether different in its pretensions." It is "a picture, by an immature hand, of sunny luxuriance overclouded; but of a cloud, no less brief than beautiful, crossing the gulfs of Tartarus. Those who, after having seen lightning, will tolerate no other effect of light, have a right to say so, and may have the highest critical reason on their side; but those who will do otherwise have perhaps more; for they can enjoy lightning, and a bask in the sunshine too."

Scarce had I learnt the names of all that press
Of knights and dames, than I beheld a sight
Nigh reft my wits for very tenderness.

"O guide!" I said, "fain would I, if I might,
Have speech with yonder pair, that hand in hand
Seem borne before the dreadful wind so light."

"Wait," said my guide, "until thou seest their band
Sweep round. Then beg them, by that love, to stay;
And they will come, and hover where we stand."

Anon the whirlwind flung them round that way;
And then I cried, "Oh, if I ask nought ill,
Poor weary souls, have speech with me, I pray."

As doves, that leave some bevy circling still,
Set firm their open wings, and through the air
Sweep homewards, wafted by their pure good will;

So broke from Dido's flock that gentle pair,
Cleaving, to where we stood, the air malign;
Such strength to bring them had a loving prayer.

The female spoke. "O living soul benign!"
She said, "thus, in this lost air visiting
Us, who with blood stain'd the sweet earth divine;

"Had we a friend in heaven's eternal King,
We would beseech him keep thy conscience clear,
Since to our anguish thou dost pity bring.

"Of what it pleaseth thee to speak and hear,
To that we also, till this lull be o'er
That falleth now, will speak and will give ear.

"The place where I was born is on the shore,
Where Po brings all his rivers to depart
In peace, and fuse them with the ocean floor.

" Love, that soon kindleth in a gentle heart,
Seiz'd him thou look'st on for the form and face,
Whose end still haunts me like a rankling dart.

" Love, which by love will be denied no grace,
Gave me a transport in my turn so true,
That lo! 'tis with me, even in this place.

" Love brought us to one grave. The hand that slew,
Is doom'd to mourn us in the pit of Cain."
Such were the words that told me of those two.

Downcast I stood, looking so full of pain
To think how hard and sad a case it was,
That my guide ask'd what held me in that vein.

His voice arous'd me; and I said, " Alas!
All their sweet thoughts then, all the steps that led
To love, but brought them to this dolorous pass."

Then turning my sad eyes to theirs, I said,
" Francesca, see—these human cheeks are wet—
Truer and sadder tears were never shed.

" But tell me. At the time when sighs were sweet,
What made thee strive no longer;—hurried thee
To the last step where bliss and sorrow meet?"

" There is no greater sorrow," answer'd she,
" And this thy teacher here knoweth full well,
Than calling to mind joy in misery.

" But since thy wish be great to hear us tell
How we lost all but love, tell it I will,
As well as tears will let me. It befell,

" One day, we read how Lancelot gazed his fill
At her he lov'd, and what his lady said.
We were alone, thinking of nothing ill.

"Oft were our eyes suspended as we read,
And in our cheeks the colour went and came;
Yet one sole passage struck resistance dead.

"'Twas where the lover, moth-like in his flame,
Drawn by her sweet smile, kiss'd it. O then, he
Whose lot and mine are now for aye the same,

"All in a tremble, on the mouth kiss'd *me*.
The book did all. Our hearts within us burn'd
Through that alone. That day no more read we."

While thus one spoke, the other spirit mourn'd
With wail so woful, that at his remorse
I felt as though I should have died. I turn'd

Stone-stiff; and to the ground, fell like a corse.

UGOLINO AND HIS CHILDREN.

FROM THE SAME.

In the ninth, or frozen circle of his Hell, Dante is shown the embodied spirits of traitors. Among them is Count Ugolino, who betrayed Pisa to the Florentines, horribly feeding on the skull of Archbishop Ruggieri, who was said to have shut up the Count with his four children in a tower, and starved them all to death. Dante interrogates Ugolino, and is told his dreadful story.

Quitting the traitor Bocca's barking soul,[166]
We saw two more, so iced up in one hole,
That the one's visage capp'd the other's head;
And as a famish'd man devoureth bread,
So rent the top one's teeth the skull below
'Twixt nape and brain. Tydeus, as stories show,
Thus to the brain of Menalippus ate:—[167]
"O thou!" I cried, "showing such bestial hate
To him thou tearest, read us whence it rose;
That, if thy cause be juster than thy foe's,
The world, when I return, knowing the truth,
May of thy story have the greater ruth."

His mouth he lifted from his dreadful fare,
That sinner, wiping it with the gray hair
Whose roots he had laid waste; and thus he said:—
"A desperate thing thou askest; what I dread
Even to think of. Yet, to sow a seed
Of infamy to him on whom I feed,
Tell it I will:—ay, and thine eyes shall see
Mine own weep all the while for misery.
Who thou mayst be, I know not; nor can dream
How thou cam'st hither; but thy tongue doth seem
To show thee, of a surety, Florentine.
Know then, that I was once Count Ugoline.
And this man was Ruggieri, the archpriest.
Still thou mayst wonder at my raging feast;
For though his snares be known, and how his key
He turn'd upon my trust, and murder'd me,
Yet what the murder was, of what strange sort
And cruel, few have had the true report.

"Hear then and judge.—In the tower called since then
The Tower of Famine, I had lain and seen
Full many a moon fade through the narrow bars,
When, in a dream one night, mine evil stars
Show'd me the future with its dreadful face.
Methought this man led a great lordly chase
Against a wolf and cubs, across the height
Which barreth Lucca from the Pisan's sight.
Lean were the hounds, high-bred, and sharp for blood;
And foremost in the press Gualandi rode,
Lanfranchi, and Sismondi.[168] Soon were seen
The father and his sons, those wolves I mean,
Limping, and by the hounds all crush'd and torn:
And as the cry awoke me in the morn,
I heard my children, while they dozed in bed
(For they were with me), wail, and ask for bread.
Full cruel, if it move thee not, thou art,
To think what thoughts then rush'd into my heart.
What wouldst thou weep at, weeping not at this?—
All had now waked, and something seem'd amiss,
For 'twas the time they used to bring us bread.
And from our dreams had grown a horrid dread.

I listen'd; and a key, down stairs, I heard
Lock up the dreadful turret. Not a word
I spoke, but look'd my children in the face:
No tear I shed, so firmly did I brace
My soul; but *they* did; and my Anselm said,
'Father, you look so!—Wont they bring us bread?'
E'en then I wept not, nor did answer word
All day, nor the next night. And now was stirr'd,
Upon the world without, another day;
And of its light there came a little ray
Which mingled with the gloom of our sad jail;
And looking to my children's bed, full pale,
In four small faces mine own face I saw,
Oh, then, both hands for misery did I gnaw;
And they, thinking I did it, being mad
For food, said, 'Father, we should be less sad
If you would feed on us. Children, they say,
Are their own father's flesh. Starve not to-day.'
Thenceforth they saw me shake not, hand nor foot.
That day, and next, we all continued mute.
O thou hard Earth! why openedst thou not?—
Next day (it was the fourth in our sad lot)
My Gaddo stretch'd him at my feet, and cried,
'Dear father, wont you help me?' and he died.
And surely as thou seest me here undone,
I saw my whole four children, one by one,
Between the fifth day and the sixth, all die.
I became blind; and in my misery
Went groping for them, as I knelt and crawl'd
About the room; and for three days I call'd
Upon their names, as though they could speak too,
Till famine did what grief had fail'd to do."

Having spoke thus, he seiz'd with fiery eyes
That wretch again, his feast and sacrifice,
And fasten'd on the skull, over a groan,
With teeth as strong as mastiff's on a bone.

Ah, Pisa! thou that shame and scandal be
To the sweet land that speaks the tongue of *Sì*,[169]

Since Florence spareth thy vile neck the yoke,
Would that the very isles would rise, and choke
Thy river, and drown every soul within
Thy loathsome walls. What if this Ugolin
Did play the traitor, and give up (for so
The rumour runs) thy castles to the foe,
Thou hadst no right to put to rack like this
His children. Childhood innocency is.
But that same innocence, and that man's name,
Have damn'd thee, Pisa, to a Theban fame.[170]

This most affecting of all Dante's stories has been told beautifully (as I have remarked elsewhere) by Chaucer; "but he had not the heart to finish it." He refers for the conclusion to his original, the "grete poete of Itaille;" adding, that Dante will not fail his readers a single word—that is to say, not an atom of the cruelty.

Our great gentle-hearted countryman, who tells Fortune that it was

"Grete crueltie
Such birdès for to put in such a cage,"

adds a touch of pathos in the behaviour of one of the children, which Dante does not seem to have thought of:

"There, day by day, this child began to cry,
Till in his father's barme [lap] adown he lay;
And said, 'Farewell, father, I muste die,'
And *kissed his father*, and died the same day."

Appendix to the Author's "Stories from the Italian Poets" (in prose), vol. i. p. 407.

It will be a relief perhaps, to the reader, and would have been a comfort to Chaucer to know, what history has since discovered,—namely, that the story of Ugolino is very doubtful.

PETRARCH'S CONTEMPLATIONS OF DEATH

IN THE BOWER OF LAURA.

Clear, fresh, and dulcet streams,
Which the fair shape who seems
To me sole woman, haunted at noontide;
Fair bough, so gently fit,
(I sigh to think of it,)
Which lent a pillar to her lovely side;
And turf, and flowers bright-eyed,
O'er which her folded gown
Flow'd like an angel's down;

And you, O holy air and hush'd,
Where first my heart at her sweet glances gush'd;
Give ear, give ear with one consenting,
To my last words, my last, and my lamenting.

If 'tis my fate below,
And heaven will have it so,
That love must close these dying eyes in tears,
May my poor dust be laid
In middle of your shade,
While my soul naked mounts to its own spheres.
The thought would calm my fears,
When taking, out of breath,
The doubtful step of death;
For never could my spirit find
A stiller port after the stormy wind;
Nor in more calm, abstracted bourne,
Slip from my travaill'd flesh, and from my bones outworn.

Perhaps, some future hour
To her accustomed bower
Might come the untamed, and yet the gentle she;
And where she saw me first,
Might turn with eyes athirst
And kinder joy to look again for me;
Then, oh the charity!
Seeing amidst the stones
The earth that held my bones,
A sigh for very love at last
Might ask of Heaven to pardon me the past:
And Heaven itself could not say nay,
As with her gentle veil she wiped the tears away.

How well I call to mind,
When from those boughs the wind
Shook down upon her bosom flower on flower;
And there she sat, meek-eyed,
In midst of all that pride,
Sprinkled and blushing through an amorous shower.
Some to her hair paid dower,

And seem'd to dress the curls
Queenlike, with gold and pearls;
Some, snowing, on her drapery stopp'd,
Some on the earth, some on the water dropped;
While others, fluttering from above,
Seem'd wheeling round in pomp, and saying, "Here reigns Love."
How often then I said,
Inward and fill'd with dread,
"Doubtless this creature came from paradise!"
For at her look the while,
Her voice and her sweet smile,
And heavenly air, truth parted from mine eyes;
So that, with long-drawn sighs,
I said, as far from men,
"How came I here, and when!"
I had forgotten; and alas!
Fancied myself in heaven, not where I was:
And from that time till this, I bear
Such love for the green bower, I cannot rest elsewhere.

ANDREA DE BASSO'S ODE TO A DEAD BODY.

FROM THE ITALIAN.

ANDREA DE BASSO was a churchman of Ferrara, who lived in the fifteenth century. The translator need not disclaim all participations with the bigotry of his fine poem. A finer rebuke might be given it, by supposing the soul of the deceased to animate her body for the occasion, and so return his "railing accusation" in a spirit of gentle and final knowledge. It must be owned, however, that his ferocity is of a very grand and appalling description. The seeming coarseness of one or two passages (besides being reducible to nothing in the eyes of a philosophy more genial, and more discerning between life and death) is borne away in the tempest of the speaker's enthusiasm, and in the sense of the great interests of which he thought he was advocate.

RISE from the loathsome and devouring tomb,
Give up thy body, woman without heart,
Now that its worldly part
Is over; and deaf, blind, and dumb,
Thou servest worms for food,
And from thine altitude

Fierce death has shaken thee down,
And thou dost fit
Thy bed within a pit.
Night, endless night, hath got thee
To clutch, and to englut thee;
And rottenness confounds
Thy limbs and their sleek rounds;
And thou art stuck there, stuck there, in despite,
Like a foul animal in a trap at night.
Come in the public path, and see how all
Shall fly thee, as a child goes shrieking back
From something long and black,
Which mocks along the wall.
See if the kind will stay
To hear what thou wouldst say;
See if thine arms can win
One soul to think of sin;
See if the tribe of wooers
Will now become pursuers;
And if where they make way,
Thou'lt carry now the day;
Or whether thou wilt spread not such foul night,
That thou thyself shalt feel the shudder and the fright.

Yes, till thou turn into the loathly hole,
As the least pain to thy bold-facedness,
There let thy foul distress
Turn round upon thy soul,
And cry, O wretch in a shroud,
That wast so headstrong proud,
This, this is the reward
For hearts that are so hard,
That flaunt so, and adorn,
And pamper them, and scorn
To cast a thought down hither,
Where all things come to wither:
And where no resting is, and no repentance,
Even to the day of the last awful sentence.
Where is that alabaster bosom now,
That undulated once, like sea on shore?
'Tis clay unto the core.

Where are those sparkling eyes,
That were like twins o' the skies?
Alas! two caves are they,
Filled only with dismay.
Where is the lip, that shone
Like painting newly done?
Where the round cheek? and where
The sunny locks of hair?
And where the symmetry that bore them all?
Gone, like the broken clouds when the winds fall.

Did I not tell thee this, over and over?
The time will come, when thou wilt not be fair?
Nor have that conquering air?
Nor be supplied with lover?
Lo! now behold the fruit
Of all that scorn of shame;
Is there one spot the same
In all that fondled flesh?
One limb that's not a mesh
Of worms, and sore offence,
And horrible succulence?
Tell me, is there one jot, one jot remaining,
To show thy lovers now the shapes which thou wast vain in?
Love?—Heaven should be implored for something else,
For power to weep, and to bow down one's soul.
Love?—'Tis a fiery dole,
A punishment like hell's.
Yet thou, puffed with thy power,
Who wert but as the flower
That warns us in the psalm,
Didst think thy veins ran balm
From an immortal fount;
Didst take on thee to mount
Upon an angel's wings,
When thou wert but as things
Clapped, on a day, in Ægypt's catalogue,
Under the worshipped nature of a dog.

Ill would it help thee now, were I to say,
Go, weep at thy confessor's feet, and cry,
" Help, father, or I die:
See—see—he knows his prey;
Even he, the dragon old!
Oh, be thou a strong hold
Betwixt my foe and me!
For I would fain be free,
But am so bound in ill,
That struggle as I will,
It strains me to the last,
And I am losing fast
My breath and my poor soul, and thou art he
Alone canst save me in thy piety."
But thou didst smile perhaps, thou thing besotted,
Because with some, death is a sleep, a word?
Hast thou then ever heard
Of one that slept and rotted?
Rare is the sleeping face
That wakes not as it was.
Thou shouldst have earned high heaven,
And then thou mightst have given
Glad looks below, and seen
Thy buried bones serene,
As odorous and as fair,
As evening lilies are;
And in the day of the great trump of doom,
Happy thy soul had been to join them at the tomb.
Ode, go thou down and enter
The horrors of the centre:
Then fly amain, with news of terrible fate
To those who think they may repent them late.

FRIENDS AND FOES.

FROM ARIOSTO.

ARIOSTO does not write in the intense manner of Dante. He was a poet of other times and opinions; much inferior to Dante, yet still a great poet of his kind, true to nature, more universal in his sympathies,

giving wonderful verisimilitude to the wildest fictions, and full of a charming ease as well as force, though enjoyment sometimes makes him diffuse, and even a little weak and languid. This defect is not unobservable in the episodes before us, as far as style is concerned; though otherwise, and often in the style also, they are full of spirit of the most various kind, both grave and gay.

The episode of *Medoro and Cloridano* (the Friends here so mixed up with Foes), is a variation of that of *Nisus and Euryalus* in Virgil, with beautiful additions. It is a story of friendship and gratitude, and shows the poet's hearty belief in those virtues. The episode of *Angelica and Medoro*, into which it runs, is a story of love, or rather of girlish passion, and equally shows his truth to the less sentimental impulses of nature, especially where he contrasts his heroine's dotage on the boy with her previous indifference to lovers of a grander sort, who doted on herself. But coquet and mere girl as she was, albeit a queen, this simple reference to a fact in the history and constitution of human nature, has rendered her marriage with the young Moor a favourite with all readers; and the lovely combined names of "Angelica and Medoro," have become almost synonymous with a "true lover's knot." Indeed the passion, however obviously intended for such by the poet, is not without a true motive of the heart in the first instance.

The circumstances described in these passages take place during the supposed siege of Paris by the Saracens, in the time of Charlemagne. The Saracen and Christian forces are assembled under the city walls, and the former have just sustained a defeat.

All night, the Saracens, in their batter'd stations,
Feeling but ill secure, and sore distress'd,
Gave way to tears, and groans, and lamentations,
Only as hush'd as might be, and suppress'd;
Some for the loss of friends and of relations
Left on the field; others for want of rest,
Who had been wounded and were far from home;
But most for dread of what was yet to come.

Among the rest two Moorish youths were there,
Born of a lowly stock in Ptolemais,
Whose story teems with evidence so rare
Of tried affection, it must here find place.
Their names Medoro and Cloridano were.
They had shown Dardinel[171] the same true face,
Whatever fortune waited on his lance,
And now had cross'd the sea with him to France.

The one, a hunter, used to every sky,
Was of the rougher make, but prompt and fleet:

Medoro had a cheek of rosy dye,
Fair, and delightful for its youth complete:
Of all that came to that great chivalry,
None had a face more lively or more sweet.
Black eyes he had, and sunny curls of hair;
He seem'd an angel, newly from the air.

These two, with others, where the ramparts lay,
Were keeping watch to guard against surprise,
What time the Night, in middle of its way,
Wonders at heaven with its drowsy eyes.
Medoro there, in all he had to say,
Could not but talk, with sadness and with sighs,
Of Dardinel his lord; nay, feel remorse,
Though guiltless, for his yet unburied corse.

"O Cloridan," he said, "I try in vain
To bear the thought; nor ought I, if I could.
Think of a man like that, left on the plain
For wolves and crows! he, too, that was so good
To my poor self! How can he thus remain,
And I stand here, sparing my wretched blood,
Which, for his sake, might twenty times o'erflow,
And yet not pay him half the debt I owe?

"I will go forth,—I will,—and seek him yet,
That he may want not a grave's covering;
And God will grant, perhaps, that I may get
E'en to the sleeping camp of the French king.
Do thou remain; for if my name is set
For death in heav'n, thou mayst relate the thing;
So that if fate cut short the glorious part,
The world may know 'twas not for want of heart."

Struck with amaze was Cloridan to see
Such heart, such love, such duty in a youth;
And labour'd (for he lov'd him tenderly)
To turn a thought so dangerous to them both;
But no—a sorrow of that high degree
Is no such thing to comfort or to soothe.

Medoro was dispos'd, either to die,
Or give his lord a grave wherein to lie.

Seeing that nothing bent him or could move,
Cloridan cried, "My road then shall be thine:
I too will join in such a work of love;
I too would clasp a death-bed so divine.
Life—pleasure—glory—what would it behoove
Remaining without thee, Medoro mine.
Such death with thee would better far become me,
Than die for grief, shouldst thou be taken from me."

Thus both resolv'd, they put into their place
The next on guard, and slip from the redoubt.
They cross the ditch, and in a little space
Enter our quarters, looking round about.
So little dream we of a Moorish face,
Our camp is hush'd, and every fire gone out.
'Twixt heaps of arms and carriages they creep,
Up to the very eyes in wine and sleep.

Cloridan stopp'd awhile, and said, "Look here!
Occasions are not things to let go by.
Some of the race who cost our lord so dear,
Surely, Medoro, by this arm must die.
Do thou meanwhile keep watch, all eye and ear,
Lest any one should come:—I'll push on, I,
And lead the way, and make through bed and board
An ample passage for thee with my sword."

He said; and enter'd without more ado
The tent where Alpheus lay, a learned Mars,
Who had but lately come to court, and knew
Physic, and magic, and a world of stars.
This was a cast they had not help'd him to;
Indeed their flatteries had been all a farce;
For he had found, that after a long life
He was to die, poor man, beside his wife:

And now the cautious Saracen has put
His sword, as true as lancet, in his weason.

Four mouths close by are equally well shut,
Before they can find time to ask the reason.
Their names are not in Turpin ;[172] and I cut
Their lives as short, not to be out of season.
Next Palidon died, a man of snug resources,
Who made up his bed between two horses.

They then arriv'd, where, pillowing his head
Upon a barrel, lay unhappy Grill.
Much vow'd had he, and much believ'd indeed,
That he, that blessed night, would sleep his fill.
The reckless Moor beheads him on his bed,
And wastes his blood and wine at the same spill:
For he held quarts; and in his dreams that very
Moment had fill'd, but found his glass miscarry.

Near Grill, a German and a Greek there lay,
Andropono and Conrad, who had pass'd
Much of the night, *al fresco*, in drink and play;
A single stroke a-piece made it their last.
Happy, if they had thought to play away
Till daylight on their board his eye had cast!
But fate determines all these matters still,
Let us arrange them for her as we will.

Like as a lion in a fold of sheep,
Whom desperate hunger has made gaunt and spare,
Kills, bleeds, devours, and mangles in a heap
The feeble flock collected meekly there;
So the fierce Pagan bleeds us in our sleep,
And lays about, and butchers everywhere:
And now Medoro joins the dreadful sport,
But scorns to strike among the meaner sort.

Upon a duke he came, La Brett, who slept
Fast in his lady's arms, embrac'd and fix'd;
So close they were, so fondly had they kept,
That not the air itself could get betwixt.
O'er both their necks at once the falchion swept.
O happy death! O cup too sweetly mix'd!

For as their bosoms and affections were,
E'en so, I trust, their souls went clasp'd in air.

Ardalic and Malindo next are slain,
Princes whose race the Flemish sceptre wield:
They had been just made knights by Charlemagne,
And had the lilies[173] added to their shield,
Because, the hardest day of the campaign,
He saw them both turn blood-red in the field.
Lands, too, he said, he'd give; and would have done it,
Had not Medoro put his veto on it.

The wily sword was reaching now the ring
Of the pavilions of the Peers,—the fence
Of the more high pavilion of the King.
They were his guard by turns. The Saracens
Here make a halt, and think it fit to bring
Their slaughter to a close, and get them hence;
Since it appears impossible to make
So wide a circuit, and find none awake.

They might have got much booty if they chose,
But now to get clean off is their great good.
Cloridan leads as heretofore, and goes
Picking the safest way out that he could.
At last they come, where, amidst shields and bows,
And swords, and spears, in one great plash of blood,
Lie poor and rich, the monarch and the slave,
And men and horses, heap'd without a grave.

The horrible mixture of the bodies there,
(For all the field was reeking round about)
Would have made vain their melancholy care
Till day-time, which 'twas best to do without,
Had not the Moon, at poor Medoro's prayer,
Put from a darksome cloud her bright horn out.
Medoro to the beam devoutly rais'd
His head, and thus petition'd as he gaz'd:

"O holy queen, who by our ancestors
Justly wert worshipp'd by a triple name;

Who show'st in heav'n, and earth, and hell, thy powers
And beauteous face, another and the same;
And who in forests, thy old favourite bowers,
Art the great huntress, following the game;
Show me, I pray thee, where my sovereign lies,
Who while he lived found favour in thine eyes."[174]

At this, whether 'twas chance or faith, the moon
Parted the cloud, and issued with a stoop,
Fair, as when first she kiss'd Endymion,
And to his arms gave herself naked up.
The city, at that light, burst forth and shone,
And both the camps, and all the plain and slope,
And the two hills that rose on either quarter,
Far from the walls, Montlery and Montmartre.

Most brilliantly of all the lustre shower'd
Where lay the son of great Almontes, dead.
Medoro, weeping, went to his dear lord,
Whom by his shield he knew, of white and red.
The bitter tears bathed all his face, and pour'd
From either eye, like founts along their bed.
So sweet his ways, so sweet his sorrows were,
They might have stopt the very winds to hear.

But low he wept, and scarcely audible;
Not that he cared what a surprise might cost,
From any dread of dying; for he still
Felt a contempt for life, and wish'd it lost;
But from the fear, lest ere he could fulfil
His pious business there, it might be crost.
Rais'd on their shoulders is the crownèd load;
And shared between them thus, they take their road.

With the dear weight they make what speed they may,
Like an escaping mother to a birth;
And now comes he, the lord of life and day,
To take the stars from heav'n, the shade from earth;
When the young Scottish prince,[175] who never lay
Sleeping, when things were to be done of worth,

After continuing the pursuit all night
Came to the field with the first morning light.

And with him came, about him and behind,
A troop of knights, whom they could see from far,
All met upon the road, in the same mind
To search the field for precious spoils of war.
"Brother," said Cloridan, "we must needs, I find,
Lay down our load, and try how fleet we are.
It would be hardly wise to have it said,
We lost two living bodies for a dead."

And off he shook his burden, with that word,
Fancying Medoro would do just the same;
But the poor boy, who better lov'd his lord,
Took on his shoulders all the weight that came.
The other ran, as if with one accord,
Not guessing what had made his fellow lame.
Had he, he would have dared, not merely one,
But heaps of deaths, rather than fled alone.

The knights, who were determin'd that those two
Should either yield them prisoners or die,
Dispers'd themselves, and without more ado
Seiz'd every pass which they might issue by.
The chief himself rode on before, and drew
Nearer and nearer with a steadfast eye;
For seeing them betray such marks of fear,
'Twas plain that in those two no friends were near.

There was an old forest there in those days,
Thick with o'ershadowing trees and underwood,
Which, like a labyrinth, ran into a maze
Of narrow paths, and made a solitude.
The fliers reckoned on its friendly ways,
For giving them close covert while pursued:—
But he that loves these chants of mine in rhyme,
May choose to hear the rest another time.[176]

None knows the heart in which he may confide,
As long as he sits high on Fortune's wheel;
For friends of all sorts then are by his side,
Who show him all the self-same face of zeal:
But let the goddess roll him from his pride,
The flattering set are off upon their heel;
And he who lov'd him in his heart alone
Stands firm, and will, even when life is gone.

If eyes could see the heart as well as face,
Many a great man at court would trample others,
And many an humble one in little grace,
Would change their destiny for one another's;
This would mount up into the highest place—
That go and help the scullions and their mothers.
But turn we to Medoro, good and true,
Who lov'd his lord, whatever fate could do.

The unhappy youth, now in the thickest way
Of all the wood, would fain have hidden close;
But the dead weight that on his shoulders lay,
Hampers his path, whichever side he goes.
Strange to the country too, he goes astray,
And turns and tramples 'midst the brakes and boughs.
Meanwhile his friend, less burden'd for the race,
Has got in safety to a distant place.

Cloridan came to where he heard no more
The hue and cry that sent him like a dart;
But when he turn'd about and miss'd Medòr,[177]
He seem'd to have deserted his own heart.
"Great God!" he cried; "not to see this before!
How could I be so mad? How could I part
With thee, Medoro, and come driving here,
And never dream I left thee, how or where?"

So saying, he returns with bitter sighs
Into the tangled wood, by the same path,
And keeps it narrowly with yearning eyes,
And treads with zeal the track of his own death.

And all the while, horses he hears, and cries,
And threatening voices that take short his breath:
And last of all he hears, and now can see,
Medoro, press'd about with cavalry.

They are a hundred, and all round him. He,
While the chief cries to take him prisoner,
Turns like a wheel, and faces valiantly
All that would seize him, leaping here and there,
Now to an elm, an oak, or other tree,
Nor ever parts he with his burden dear,
See!—he has laid it on the ground at last,
The better to control and keep it fast.

Like as a bear, whom men in mountains start
In her old stony den, and dare, and goad,
Stands o'er her children with uncertain heart,
And roars for rage and sorrow in one mood:
Anger incites her, and her natural part,
To use her nails, and bathe her lips in blood;
Love melts her, and for all her angry roar,
Holds back her eyes to look on those she bore:

Cloridan knows not how to give his aid,
And yet he must, and die too:—that he knows:
But ere he changes from alive to dead,
He casts about to settle a few foes:
He takes an arrow,—one of his best made,—
And works so well in secret, that it goes
Into a Scotchman's head, right to the brains,
And jerks his lifeless fingers from the reins.

The horsemen in confusion turn about,
To see by what strange hand their fellow died,
When a new shaft's in middle of the rout,
And the man tumbles by his fellow's side.
He was just wondering, and calling out,
And asking questions, fuming as he cried;
The arrow comes, and dashes to his throat,
And cuts him short in middle of his note.

Zerbin, the leader of the troop, could hold
His rage no longer at this new surprise,
But darting on the boy, with eyes that roll'd,
"You shall repent this insolence," he cries;
Then twisting with his hand those locks of gold,
He drags him back, to see him as he dies;
But when he sets his eyes on that sweet face,
He could not do it, 'twas so hard a case.

The youth betook him to his prayers, and said,
"For God's sake, sir, be not so merciless
As to prevent my burying the dead:
'Tis a king's body that's in this distress:
Think not I ask from any other dread;
Life could give me but little happiness.
All the life now which I desire to have,
Is just enough to give my lord a grave.

"If you've a Theban heart, and birds of prey
Must have their food before your rage can cool,
Feast them on me; only do let me lay
His limbs in earth, that has been used to rule."
So spake the young Medoro, in a way
To turn a rock, it was so beautiful.
As for the prince, so deeply was he mov'd,
That all at once he pardon'd and he lov'd.

A ruffian, at this juncture, of the band,
Little restrain'd by what restrain'd the rest,
Thrust with his lance across the suppliant's hand,
And pierc'd his delicate and faithful breast.
The act,—in one too under his command,—
Displeas'd the princely chief, and much distress'd;
The more so, as the poor boy dropp'd his head,
And fell so pale that all believ'd him dead.

Such was his grief, and such was his disdain,
That crying out, "The blood be on his head!"
He turn'd in wrath, to give the thrust again;
But the false villain, ere the words were said,

Put spurs into his horse and fled amain,
Stooping his rascal shoulders, as he fled.
Cloridan, when he sees Medoro fall,
Leaps from the wood, and comes defying all;

And casts away his bow, and almost mad,
Goes slashing round among his enemies,
Rather for death, than any hope he had
Of cutting his revenge to its fit size.
His blood soon colour'd many a dripping blade,
And he perceives with pleasure that he dies;
And so his strength being fairly at an end,
He lets himself fall down beside his friend.

The troop then follow'd where their chief had gone,
Pursuing his stern chase among the trees,
And leave the two companions there alone,
One surely dead, the other scarcely less.
Long time Medoro lay without a groan,
Losing his blood in such large quantities,
That life would surely have gone out at last,
Had not a helping hand been coming past.

ANGELICA AND MEDORO.

THE SEQUEL OF THE PRECEDING STORY.

THERE came by chance a damsel passing there,
Cloak'd like a peasant, to eschew surprise,
But of a royal presence, and so fair,
As well behov'd her keep grave maiden eyes.
'Tis so long since I told you news of her,
Perhaps you know her not in this disguise.
This, you must know then, was Angelica,
Proud daughter of the Khan of great Cathay.

You know the magic ring, and her distress?
Well, when she had recover'd this same ring,
It so increased her pride and haughtiness,
She seem'd too high for any living thing.[178]

She goes alone, desiring nothing less
Than a companion, even though a king:
She even scorns to recollect the flame
Of one Orlando, or his very name.

But, above all, she hates to recollect
That she had taken to Rinaldo so;[179]
She thinks it the last want of self-respect,
Pure degradation, to have look'd so low.
"Such arrogance," said Cupid, "must be check'd."
The little God betook him with his bow,
To where Medoro lay, and standing by,
Held the shaft ready with a lurking eye.

Now when the princess saw the youth all pale,
And found him grieving with his bitter wound,
Not for what one so young might well bewail,
But that his king should not be laid in ground,
She felt a something, strange and gentle, steal
Into her heart by some new way it found,
Which touch'd its hardness, and turn'd all to grace;
And more so, when he told her all his case.

And calling to her mind the little arts
Of healing, which she learnt in India,
(For 'twas a study valued in those parts,
Even for those who were in sovereign sway,
And yet so easy, too, that like the heart's,
'Twas more inherited than learnt, they say,)
She cast about, with herbs and balmy juices,
To save so fair a life for all its uses.

And thinking of an herb that caught her eye
As she was coming, in a pleasant plain,
(Whether 'twas panacea, dittany,
Or some such herb accounted sovereign
For staunching blood quickly and tenderly,
And winning out all spasm and bad pain,)
She found it not far off, and gathering some,
Return'd with it to save Medoro's bloom.

In coming back she met upon the way
A shepherd, who was riding through the wood
To find a heifer that had gone astray,
And been two days about the solitude.
She took him with her where Medoro lay,
Now feebler than he was, with loss of blood:
So much he lost, and drew so hard a breath,
That he was now fast fading to his death.

Angelica got off her horse in haste,
And made the shepherd get as fast from his;
She ground the herbs with stones, and then express'd
With her white hands the balmy milkiness,
Then dropp'd it in the wound, and bath'd his breast,
His sides, and spine, and all that was amiss:
And of such virtue was it, that at length
The blood was stopp'd and he look'd round with strength.

At last he got upon the shepherd's horse,
But would not quit the place till he had seen
Laid in the ground his lord and master's corse;
And Cloridan lay with it, who had been
Smitten so fatally with sweet remorse.
He then obeys the will of the fair queen;
And she, for very pity of his lot,
Goes and stays with him at the shepherd's cot.

Nor would she leave him, she esteem'd him so,
Till she had seen him well with her own eye;
So full of pity did her bosom grow,
Since first she saw him faint and like to die.
Seeing his manners now, and beauty too,
She felt her heart yearn somehow inwardly;
She felt her heart yearn somehow, till at last
'Twas all on fire, and burning warm and fast.

The shepherd's house was good enough, and neat,
A little shady cottage in a dell:
The man had just rebuilt it all complete,
With room to spare, in case more births befell.

There with such knowledge did the lady treat
Her handsome patient, that he soon grew well;
But not before she felt, on her own part,
A secret wound much greater in her heart.

Much greater was the wound, and deeper far,
The invisible arrow made in her heart-strings;
'Twas from Medoro's lovely eyes and hair;
'Twas from the naked archer with the wings.
She feels it now; she feels, and yet can bear
Another's less than her own sufferings.
She thinks not of herself: she thinks alone
How to cure him, by whom she is undone.

The more his wound recovers and gets ease,
Her own grows worse, and widens day by day.
The youth gets well; the lady languishes,
Now warm, now cold, as fitful fevers play.
His beauty heightens like the flowering trees;
She, miserable creature, melts away
Like the weak snow, which some warm sun has found
Fall'n, out of season, on a rising ground.

And must she speak at last, rather than die?
And must she plead without another's aid?
She must, she must; the vital moments fly—
She lives—she dies, a passion-wasted maid.
At length she burst all ties of modesty;
Her tongue explains her eyes; the words are said;
And she asks pity underneath that blow,
Which he perhaps that gave it did not know.

O Count Orlando! O King Sacripant![180]
That fame of yours, say, what avails it ye?
That lofty honour, those great deeds ye vaunt,
Say, what's their value with the lovely she?
Show me—recal to memory, (for I can't,)
Show me, I beg, one single courtesy
That ever she vouchsafed ye, far or near,
For all ye've done and have endured for her.

And you, if you could come to life again,
O Agrican, how hard 'twould seem to you,
Whose love was met by nothing but disdain,
And vile repulses, shocking to go through![181]
O Ferragus! O thousands, who in vain
Did all that loving and great hearts could do,
How would ye feel to see, with all her charms,
This thankless creature in a stripling's arms!

The young Medoro had the gathering
Of the first kiss on lips untouch'd before,
For never since her beauty blush'd with spring,
Had passion's self dared aught except adore.
To render the fond step an honest thing,
The priest was call'd to read the service o'er,
(For without marriage what can come but strife?)[182]
And the bride-mother was the shepherd's wife.

All was perform'd, in short, that could be so
In such a place, to make the nuptials good;
Nor did the happy pair think fit to go,
But spent the month and more within the wood.
The lady to the stripling seem'd to grow;
His step her step, his eyes her eyes pursued;
Nor did her love lose any of its zest,
Though she was always hanging on his breast.

In doors and out of doors, by night, by day,
She had the charmer by her side for ever:
Morning and evening they would stroll away,
Now by some field, or little tufted river;
They chose a cave in middle of the day,
Perhaps not less agreeable or clever
Than Dido and Æneas found to screen them,
When storm and tempest would have rush'd between them.

And all this while there was not a smooth tree,
That drew from stream or fount its gentle pith,
Nor stone less hard than stones are apt to be,
But they would find a knife to carve it with.

And in a thousand places you might see,
And on the walls about you and beneath,
ANGELICA AND MEDORO, tied in one,
As many ways as lover's knots could run.

And when they thought they had outspent their time,
Angelica the royal took her way,
She and Medoro, to the Indian clime,
To crown him king of her fair realm, Cathay.

A DEPRECATION OF THE NAME OF JOHN.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF CASA.

WERE I some fifteen years younger or twenty,
Master Gandolfo, I'd unbaptize myself,
On purpose not to be called John. I never
Can do a single thing in the way of business,
Nor set out fast enough from my own door,
But half-a-dozen people are calling after me;
Though, when I turn, it isn't me; such crowds
Are issuing forth, nam'd John, at the same moment.

'Tis downright insult; a mere public scandal.
Clergymen,[183] lawyers, pedants,—not a soul,
But his name's John. You shall not see a face,
Looking like what it is, a simpleton's—
Barber's, porkman's, or tooth-drawer's,—but the fellow
Seems by his look to be a John,—and *is* one!
I verily think that the first man who cried
Boil'd apples or maccaroni, was a John;
And so was he who found out roasted chestnuts,
And how to eat cucumbers, and new cheese.
By heavens! I'd rather be a German; nay,
I'd almost said a Frenchman; nay, a Jew,
And be called Matthew, or Bartholomew,
Or some such beast,—or Simon. Really people
Who christen people, ought to pause a little,
And think what they're about.—O you who love me,

Don't call me John, for God's sake; or at least,
If you must call me so, call it me softly;
For as to mentioning the name out loud,
You might as well call after one like a dog,—
Whistle, and snap your fingers, and cry "Here, boy."

Think of the name of John upon a title-page!
It damns the book at once; and reasonably:
People no sooner see it, than they conclude
They've read the work before.—Oh I must say
My father made a pretty business of it,
Calling *me* John! *me*, 'faith—his eldest son!
Heir to his—poverty! Why there's not a writ,
But nine times out of ten, is serv'd on John,
And what still more annoys me, not a bill:
Your promiser to pay is always John.

Some people fondly make the word a compound,
And get some other name to stand its friend,
Christening the hapless devil John-Antony,
John-Peter or John-Baptist, or John-Charles;
There's even John-Barnard, and John-Martin!—Oh,
See if the other name likes his society!

It never does, humour it as you will.
Change it, diminish it, call it Johnny, or Jacky,
Or Jack, 'tis always a sore point,—a wound;—
Shocking, if left alone,—and worse, if touch'd.

LAZY CORNER;

OR,

BED VERSUS BUSINESS.

FRANCESCO BERNI, one of the most popular wits and poets of Italy, flourished in the fifteenth century at the courts of Clement the Seventh and Alessandro de Medici. A tragical story used to be told of his having been poisoned by Alessandro, for refusing to administer a like death to the poisoner's brother; but nobody now believes it. Berni was related to Cardinal Bibbiena, who wrote one of the earliest Italian comedies; but the cardinal, in spite of his comedy and his

kinsmanship, did nothing for him; and he got as little from his eminence's nephew, his heir; he therefore entered the service of the pope's datary, which he ultimately quitted to reside on a small canonry he possessed at Florence; where he died, after a life of ease and good-fellowship, varied with serious as well as lively studies.

Berni was a real poet, grave as well as gay; but unfortunately he was thrown on one of the corruptest ages of Italy, and condescended to write many things unworthy of the finer parts of his genius, to amuse a dissolute nobility, He wrote such pure, unaffected Tuscan, and his manner in his lighter pieces was so exquisitely *naïve*, full of those unexpected turns in which carelessness and significance meet, that although Pulci began it, and Marot and La Fontaine excelled in it in France, it was called after his name among his countrymen, by whom it is still known as the "Bernesque" style. It had many followers who became celebrated, such as Casa, Molza, Firenzuola, Mauro, and others, most of them friends of his, and members of a club called Vine-Dressers, (*Vignaiuoli,*) who each took the name of something in connexion with wine-making. They probably composed (next to our Elizabethan club at the "Mermaid,") the most brilliant assemblage of wits that Europe has seen, not excepting those of Charles the Second's time, or the coteries of the Chaulieus and Chapelles. Voltaire profited greatly by this style; and nobody needs to be reminded what lustre it has received from the pen of Lord Byron.

But the greatest and best work of Berni, after all, was his modernization of Boiardo's beautiful old poem, the *Orlando Innamorato*, in which he exhibited a genius of the most solid description. Indeed, it is a production unique in the history of letters, having contested the palm of superiority with its original. The stanzas here attempted in English, form part of the sixty-seventh canto of this work. Berni inserted them in the account of a *Fairy Palace*, in which the fine old poet had brought his knights together to lead a luxurious life of dancing and love-making. The remodeller introduces himself as a "certain Florentine," living in the same age, and brought here for the same purpose of doing as he pleased (for that was the order of the house); only his pleasure was, not to dance, or trouble himself with action of any kind, but to lie in bed and do nothing, his brain and all his other faculties, having, he says, been worn out by eternal writing and correspondence, as secretary to the aforesaid pope's datary, a prelate, whose office it was to date the papal bulls, and to do a world of chancery business besides. Berni was a man unfit for business of any kind, except to write poetry and enjoy himself; and accordingly he here gives a ludicrous account of his official toils, and of the luxurious revenge he took of them out of the very prostration of his powers. Some dull biographers have taken the caricature for a history of his actual way of life; whereas, though it is not to be doubted that he could be lazy enough when he chose, he must have been anything but a sluggard in ordinary, his company having been in the greatest request during the sprightliest period of Italian wit, besides his having been a visitor of divers cities, and rewritten the whole of Boiardo's poem, which is a long one.

It has been supposed, and I cannot help thinking justly, that Thomson owed the idea of his charming *Castle of Indolence* to this fancy of Berni's. Mr. Stewart Rose, in his abstract of the new *Orlando Innamorato* (p. xliv.) doubts whether the author of the *Seasons* was

sufficiently conversant with Italian poetry; but surely whether he was conversant with it or not, (and the probability, I should think, was the other way,) he who had been intimate with so many scholars of all kinds, and who had also travelled in Italy himself, and could have required nothing but a hint for a fiction so congenial, might, or rather must, have heard of Berni often enough for such a result.

Thomson, a notorious lier in bed, was fifteen years writing his *Castle of Indolence;* and he is said to have been seen in his garden at Richmond eating a peach off a tree with his hands in his waistcoat pockets. I doubt if the big, but not corpulent Berni, ever went so far on the wrong side of activity as that.

Among the rest a Florentine there came,
A boon companion, of a gentle kin.
I say a Florentine, although the name
Had taken root some time in Casentin,
Where his good father wedded a fair dame,
And pitch'd his tent. The place he married in
Was call'd Bibbiena, as it is at present;
A spot upon the Arno, very pleasant.

Nigh to this place was Lamporecchio (scene
Of great Masetto's gardening recreations);
There was our hero born;—then, till nineteen,
Bred up in Florence, not on the best rations;
Then, it pleased God, settled at Rome; I mean,
Drawn there by hopes from one of his relations;
Who, though a cardinal, and Pope's right arm,
Did the poor devil neither good nor harm.[184]

This great man's heir vouchsafed him then his grace,
With whom he fared as he was wont to fare;
Whence, finding himself still in sorry case,
He thought he might as well look out elsewhere;
So hearing people wish they had a place
With the good Datary of St. Peter's chair,
A thing they talk'd of with a perfect unction—
Place get he did in that enchanting function.

This was a business which he thought he knew;
Alas! he found he didn't know a bit of it;
Nothing went right, slave as he might, and stew;
And yet he never, somehow, could get quit of it;

The more he did, the more he had to do;
Desk, shelves, hands, arms, whatever could admit of it,
Were always stuff'd with letters and with dockets,
Turning his brains, and bulging out his pockets.

Luckless in all, perhaps not worth his hire,
He even miss'd the few official sweets;
Some petty tithes assign'd him did but tire
His patience; *nil* was always on their sheets.
Now 'twas bad harvests, now a flood, now fire,
Now dev'l himself that hinder'd his receipts.
There were some fees his due;—God knows not many;
No matter;—never did he touch a penny.

The man, for all that, was a happy man;
Thought not too much; indulg'd no gloomy fit;
Folks wish'd him well. Prince, peasant, artisan,
Every one lov'd him; for the rogue had wit,
And knew how to amuse. His fancy ran
On thousands of odd things, on which he writ
Certain mad waggeries in the shape of poems,
With strange elaborations of their proems.[185]

Choleric he was withal, when fools reprov'd him;
Free of his tongue, as he was frank of heart;
Ambition, avarice, neither of them mov'd him;
True to his word; caressing without art;
A lover to excess of those that lov'd him;
Yet if he met with hate, could play a part
Which show'd the fiercest he had found his mate;
Still he was proner far to love than hate.

In person he was big, yet tight and lean,
Had long, thin legs, big nose, and a large face;
Eyebrows which there was little space between:
Deep-set, blue eyes; and beard in such good case,
That the poor eyes would scarcely have been seen,
Had it been suffer'd to forget its place;
But not approving beards to that amount,
The owner brought it to a sharp account.

But of all things, all servitude loath'd he ;
Why then should fate have wound him in its bands ?
Freedom seem'd made for him, yet strange to see,
His lot was always in another's hands ;
His ! who had always thirsted instantly
To disobey commands, because commands !
Left to his own free will, the man was glad
To further yours. Command him, he went mad.

Yet field-sports, dice, cards, balls, and such like courses,
Things which he might be thought to set store by,
Gave him but little pleasure. He liked horses ;
But was content to let them please his eye,
Buying them squaring not with his resources ;
Therefore his *summum bonum* was to lie
Stretch'd at full length ;—yea, frankly be it said,
To do no single thing but lie in bed.

'Twas owing all to that infernal writing.
Body and brain had borne such grievous rounds
Of kicks, cuffs, floors, from copying and inditing,
That he could find no balsam for his wounds,
No harbour for his wreck half so inviting
As to lie still, far from all sights and sounds,
And so, in bed, do nothing on God's earth,
But try and give his senses a new birth.

Bed, bed's the thing, by Heav'n ! (thus would he swear,)
Bed is your only work ; your only duty.
Bed is one's gown, one's slippers, one's arm-chair,
Old coat ; you're not afraid to spoil its beauty.
Large you may have it, long, wide, brown, or fair,
Down-bed or mattress, just as it may suit ye ;
Then take your clothes off, turn in, stretch, lie double ;
Be but in bed, you're quit of earthly trouble.

Borne to the fairy palace then, but tir'd
Of seeing so much dancing, he withdrew
Into a distant room, and there desir'd
A bed might be set up, handsome and new,

With all the comforts that the case requir'd—
Mattresses huge, and pillows not a few,
Put here and there, in order that no ease
Might be found wanting to cheeks, arms, or knees.

The bed was eight feet wide, lovely to see,
With white sheets, and fine curtains, and rich loops,
Things vastly soothing to calamity;
The coverlet hung light in silken droops:
It might have held six people easily,
But he dislik'd to lie in bed by groups.
A large bed to himself; *that* was his notion;
With room enough to swim in, like the ocean.

In this retreat there join'd him a good soul,
A Frenchman, one who had been long at court,
An admirable cook; though, on the whole,
His gains of his deserts had fallen short.
For him was made, cheek, as it were, by jowl,
A second bed of the same noble sort,
Yet not so close, but that the folks were able
To set between the two a dinner-table.

Here was serv'd up on snow-white table-cloths,
Every the daintiest possible comestible
In the French taste (all others being Goths),
Dishes alike delightful and digestible;
Only our scribe chose syrups, soups, and broths,
The smallest trouble being a detestable
Bore, into which not ev'n his dinner led him;
Therefore the servants always came, and fed him.

Nothing at these times but his head was seen;
The coverlet came close beneath his chin;
And then, from out the bottle or tureen,
They fill'd a silver pipe, which he let in
Between his lips, all easy, smooth, and clean,
And so he fill'd his philosophic skin:
For not a finger all the while he stirr'd;
Nor, lest his tongue should tire, scarce utter'd word.

The name of that same cook was Master Pierre :[186]
He told a tale well, something short and light.
Quoth scribe, "Those people that keep dancing there,
Have little wit." Quoth Pierre, "You're very right."
And then he told a tale, or humm'd an air;
Then took a sup of something, or a bite;
And then he turn'd himself to sleep; and then
Awoke and ate: and then he slept again.

This was their mode of living, day by day;
'Twixt food and sleep their moments softly spun;
They took no note of time and tide, not they;
Feast, fast, or working-day, they held all one;
Never disputed one another's say;
Never heard bell, never were told of dun.
It was particularly understood,
No news was to be brought them, bad or good.

But, above all, no writing was known there,
No pen and ink, no pounce-box. Oh, my God!
Like toads and snakes we shunn'd 'em; like despair,
Like death, like judgment, like a fiery rod;
So green the wounds, so dire the memories were,
Left by that rack of ten long years and odd,
Which tore out of his very life and senses
The most undone of all amanuenses.

One more thing I may note, that made the day
Pass well; one custom, not a little healing;
Which was, to look above us, as we lay,
And count the spots and blotches in the ceiling:
Noting what shapes they took to, and which way,
And where the plaster threaten'd to be peeling;
Whether the spot look'd new, or old, or what;
Or whether 'twas in fact, a spot or not.[187]

ODE TO THE GOLDEN AGE.

SUNG BY A CHORUS OF SHEPHERDS IN TASSO'S AMYNTAS.

IT is to be borne in mind, that the opinions expressed in this famous ode of Tasso's, are only so expressed on the supposition of their compatibility with a state of innocence.

O LOVELY age of gold!
Not that the rivers roll'd
With milk, or that the woods wept honey-dew;
Not that the ready ground
Produc'd without a wound,
Or the mild serpent had no tooth that slew;
Not that a cloudless blue
Forever was in sight,
Or that the heaven which burns,
And now is cold by turns,
Look'd out in glad and everlasting light;
No, nor that even the insolent ships from far
Brought war to no new lands, nor riches worse than war:
But solely that that vain
And breath-invented pain,
That idol of mistake, that worshipped cheat,
That Honour,—since so call'd
By vulgar minds appall'd,
Play'd not the tyrant with our nature yet.
It had not come to fret
The sweet and happy fold
Of gentle human-kind;
Nor did its hard law bind
Souls nurs'd in freedom; but that law of gold,
That glad and golden law, all free, all fitted,
Which Nature's own hand wrote—What pleases, is permitted.

Then among streams and flowers,
The little winged Powers
Went singing carols without torch or bow;
The nymphs and shepherds sat
Mingling with innocent chat

Sports and low whispers; and with whispers low,
Kisses that would not go.
The maid, her childhood o'er,
Kept not her bloom uneyed,
Which now a veil must hide,
Nor the crisp apples which her bosom bore;
And oftentimes, in river or in lake,
The lover and his love their merry bath would take.

'Twas thou, thou, Honour, first
That didst deny our thirst
Its drink, and on the fount thy covering set;
Thou bad'st kind eyes withdraw
Into constrained awe,
And keep the secret for their tears to wet;
Thou gatheredst in a net
The tresses from the air,
And mad'st the sports and plays
Turn all to sullen ways,
And putt'st on speech a rein, in steps a care.
Thy work it is,—thou shade that wilt not move,
That what was once the gift, is now the theft of Love.

Our sorrows and our pains,
These are thy noble gains.
But oh, thou Love's and Nature's masterer,
Thou conqueror of the crown'd,
What dost thou on this ground,
Too small a circle for thy mighty sphere?
Go, and make slumber dear
To the renown'd and high;
We here, a lowly race,
Can live without thy grace,
After the use of mild antiquity.
Go, let us love; since years
No truce allow, and life soon disappears;
Go, let us love; the daylight dies, is born;
But unto us the light
Dies once for all, and sleep brings on eternal night.

BACCHUS IN TUSCANY.

A DITHYRAMBIC POEM,

FROM THE ITALIAN OF FRANCESCO REDI.

Come, thou monarch of the vine,
Plumpy Bacchus, with pink eyne:
In thy vats our cares be drown'd
With thy grapes our hairs be crown'd;
Cup us, till the world goes round.
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

DEDICATION

TO JOHN HUNT.

MY DEAR JOHN,—I cannot send you, as I could wish, a pipe of Tuscan wine, or a hamper of Tuscan sunshine, which is much the same thing; so in default of being able to do this, I do what I can, and send you, for a new year's present, a translation of a Tuscan bacchanal.

May it give you a hundredth part of the elevation which you have often caused to the heart of

Your affectionate Brother,

FLORENCE, Jan. 1, 1825. LEIGH HUNT.

BACCHUS IN TUSCANY.

THE conqueror of the East, the God of Wine,
Taking his rounds divine,
Pitch'd his blithe sojourn on the Tuscan hills;
And where the imperial seat
First feels the morning heat,
Lo, on the lawn, with May-time white and red,
He sat with Ariadne on a day,
And as he sang, and as he quaff'd away,
He kiss'd his charmer first, and thus he said:—

Dearest, if one's vital tide
Ran not with the grape's beside,
What would life be, (short of Cupid?)
Much too short, and far too stupid.
You see the beam here from the sky
That tips the goblet in mine eye;

Vines are nets that catch such food,
And turn them into sparkling blood.
Come then—in the beverage bold
Let's renew us and grow muscular;
And for those who're getting old,
Glasses get of size majuscular:
And in dancing and in feasting,
Quips, and cranks, and worlds of jesting,
Let us, with a laughing eye,
See the old boy Time go by,
Who with his eternal sums
Whirls his brains and wastes his thumbs.
Away with thinking! miles with care!
Hallo, you knaves! the goblet's there.

Gods my life, what glorious claret!
Blessed be the ground that bare it!
'Tis Avignon. Don't say "a flask of it;"
Into my soul I pour a cask of it!
Artimino's finer still,
Under a tun there's no having one's fill:
A tun! a tun!
The deed is done.
And now, while my lungs are swimming at will
All in a bath so noble and sweet,
A god though I be,
I too, I too have my idolotr*ee;*
And to thee, Ariadne, I consecrate
The tun and the flask,
And the funnel and cask.

Accus'd,
And abus'd,
And all mercy refus'd,
Be he who first dared upon Lecorè's plain
To take my green children and plant them in pain.
The goats and the cattle
Get into the bowers;
And sleets with a rattle
Come trampling in showers.

But lauded,
Applauded,
With laurels rewarded,
Be he, the great soul, who in vineyards divine,
Of Petraia and Castello,
Planted first the Moscadello.
Now we're here in mirth and clover,
Quaff this jewel of a wine;
It comes of a delicious vine
That makes one live twice over.
Drink it, Ariadne mine,
And bright as you are,
And a bud of a star,
You'll be Venus at her best,
Venus Venusissimest.

Hah! Montalcino. I know it well,—
The lovely little Muscadel;
A very lady-like little treat,
But something, for me, too gentle and sweet:
I pour out a glass
For the make and the grace;
But a third,—no—a third, it cannot have place:
Wine like this
A *bijou* is
(I designed it) for the festals
Of the grave composed Vestals,—
Ladies, who in cloistered choirs
Feed and keep alive chaste fires.
Wine like this
A *bijou* is
For your trim Parisian dames;
And for those
Of the lily and rose,
Who rejoice the banks of Thames.
The Pisciancio of Cotone,
That gets Scarlatti so much money,
I leave for the weak heads of those
Who know not a thing when it's under their nose.
Pisciarello of Brasciano
Also hath too much piano:

Nerveless, colourless, and sickly,
Oversweet, it cloys too quickly.
Pray let the learned Pignatelli
Upon this head enlighten the silly.
If plebeian Rome must pet it,
Why,—for God's sake, let it.

Ciccio d'Andrea himself one day,
'Mid his thunders of eloquence bursting away,
Sweet in his gravity
Fierce in his suavity,
Dared in my own proper presence to talk
Of that stuff of Anversa, half acid and chalk,
Which, whether it's verjuice, or whether it's wine,
Far surpasses, I own, any science of mine.
Let him indulge in his strange tipples
With his proud friend, Fasano there, at Naples,
Who with a horrible impiety
Swore he could judge of wines as well as I.
So daring has that bold blasphemer grown,
He now pretends to ride my golden throne,
And taking up my triumphs, rolls along
The fair Sebetus with a fiery song;
Pampering, besides, those laurels that he wears
With vines that fatten in those genial airs;
And then he maddens, and against e'en me
A Thyrsus shakes on high, and threats his deity:
But I withhold at present, and endure him:
Phœbus and Pallas from mine ire secure him.
One day perhaps, on the Sebetus, I
Will elevate a throne of luxury;
And then he will be humbled, and will come,
Offering devoutly, to avert his doom,
Ischia's and Posilippo's noble Greek;
And then perhaps I shall not scorn to make
Peace with him, and we'll booze like Hans and Herman
After the usage German:
And 'midst our bellying bottles and vast flasks
There shall be present at our tasks
For lofty arbiter (and witness gay too)
My gentle Marquis there of Oliveto.

Meanwhile, upon the Arno here,
Lo, of Pescia's Buriano,
Trebbiano, Colombano,
I drink bumpers, rich and clear.
'Tis the true old Aurum Potabile,
Gilding life when it wears shabbily:
Helen's old Nepenthe 'tis,
That in the drinking
Swallowed thinking,
And was the receipt for bliss.
Thence it is, that ever and aye,
When he doth philosophize,
Good old glorious Rucellai
Hath it for light unto his eyes;
He lifteth it, and by the shine
Well discerneth things divine;
Atoms with their airy justles,
And all manner of corpuscles,
And, as through a crystal sky-light,
How morning differeth from evening twilight,
And further telleth us the reason why go
Some stars with such a lazy light, and some with a vertigo.

Oh how widely wandereth he,
Who in the search of verity
Keeps aloof from glorious wine!
Lo, the knowledge it bringeth to me!
For Barbarossa, this wine so bright,
With its rich red look and its strawberry light,
So invites me,
And so delights me,
I should infallibly quench my inside with it,
Had not Hippocrates
And old Andromachus
Strictly forbidden it
And loudly chidden it,
So many stomachs have sicken'd and died with it.
Yet discordant as it is,
Two good biggins will come not amiss;

Because I know, while I'm drinking them down,
What is the finish and what is the crown.
A cup of good Corsican
Does it at once;
Or a cup of old Spanish
Is neat for the nonce:
Quackish resources are things for a dunce.
Cups of Chocolate,
Ay, or tea,
Are not medicines
Made for me.
I would sooner take to poison,
Than a single cup set eyes on
Of that bitter and guilty stuff ye
Talk of by the name of Coffee.
Let the Arabs and the Turks
Count it 'mongst their cruel works:
Foe of mankind, black and turbid,
Let the throats of slaves absorb it.
Down in Tartarus,
Down in Erebus,
'Twas the detestable Fifty invented it,
The Furies then took it,
To grind and to cook it,
And to Proserpine all three presented it.
If the Mussulman in Asia
Doats on a beverage so unseemly,
I differ with the man extremely.

No dotards are they, but very wise,
Those Etrurian jolly boys,
Who down their pleasant palates roll
That fair delighter of the fancy,
Malvagia of Montegonzi,
Rapturous drowner of the soul,
When I feel it gurgling, murmuring,
Down my throat and my œsophagus,
Something, an I know not what,
Strangely tickleth my sarcophagus;
Something easy of perception,
But by no means of description.

I deny not there's a merit
And odorous spirit
In the liquid Cretan amber:
But 'twould sooner see one burst
Than condescend to quench one's thirst:
Malvagia, willing creature,
Hath a much genteeler nature:
And yet were this same haughty stock
But taken from its native rock,
And bred politely on the Tuscan hills,
You'd see it lay aside
Its Cretan harshness and its pride,
And in a land where drinking's understood,
Win the true honours of a gentle blood.
There's a squalid thing, call'd beer:—
The man whose lips that thing comes near
Swiftly dies; or falling foolish,
Grows, at forty, old and owlish.
She that in the ground would hide her,
Let her take to English cider:
He who'd have his death come quicker,
Any other northern liquor.
Those Norwegians and those Laps
Have extraordinary taps:
Those Laps especially have strange fancies:
To see them drink,
I verily think
Would make me lose my senses.
But a truce to such vile subjects,
With their impious, shocking objects.
Let me purify my mouth
In a holy cup o' the south;
In a golden pitcher let me
Head and ears for comfort get me,
And drink of the wine of the vine benign,
That sparkles warm in Sansovine;
Or of that vermilion charmer
And heart-warmer,
Which brought up in Tregonzano
And old stony giggiano,

Blooms so bright and lifts the head so
Of the toasters of Arezzo.
'Twill be haply still more up,
Sparkling, piquant, quick i' the cup,
If, O page, adroit and steady,
In thy tuck'd-up choral surplice,
Thou infusest that Albano,
That Vaiano,
Which engoldens and empurples
In the grounds there of my Redi.
Manna from heaven upon thy tresses rain,
Thou gentle vineyard, whence this nectar floats!
May every vine, in every season, gain
New boughs, new leaves, new blossoms, and new fruits:
May streams of milk, a new and dulcet strain,
Placidly bathe thy pebbles and thy roots;
Nor lingering frost, nor showers that pour amain,
Shed thy green hairs nor fright thy tender shoots:
And may thy master, when for age he's crooked,
Be able to drink of thee by the bucket!
Could the lady of Tithonus
Pledge but once her grey-beard old
In as vast a tub of stone as
A becoming draught could hold,
That old worthy there above
Would renew his age of love.
Meanwhile let's renew our drinking;
But with what fresh wine, and glorious,
Shall our beaded brims be winking,
For an echoing toast victorious?
You know Lamporecchio, the castle renown'd
For the gardener, so dumb, whose works did abound;
There's a topaz they make there; pray let it go round.
Serve, serve me a dozen,
But let it be frozen;
Let it be frozen, and finished with ice,
And see that the ice be as virginly nice,
As the coldest that whistles from wintry skies.
Coolers and cellarets, crystal with snows,
Should always hold bottles in ready repose.

Snow is good liquor's fifth element;
No compound without it can give content;
For weak is the brain, and I hereby scout it,
That thinks in hot weather to drink without it.
Bring me heaps from the shady valley:
Bring me heaps
Of all that sleeps
On every village hill and alley.
Hold there, you satyrs,
Your chuffs and your chatters,
And bring me ice duly, and bring it me doubly,
Out of the grotto of Monte di Boboli,
With axes and pickaxes,
Hammers and rammers,
Thump it and hit it me,
Crack it and crash it me,
Hew it and split it me,
Pound it and smash it me,
Till the whole mass (for I'm dead dry, I think)
Turns to a cold, fit to freshen my drink.
If with hot wine we insack us,
Say our name's not Bacchus.
If we taste the weight of a button,
Say we're a glutton.
He who, when he first wrote verses,
Had the Graces by his side,
Then at rhymers' evil courses
Shook his thunders far and wide,
(For his great heart rose, and burn'd,
Till his words to thunder turn'd,)
He, I say, Menzini, he,
The marvellous and the masterly,
Whom the leaves of Phœbus crown,
Alterable Anacreon,—
He shall give me, if I do it,
Gall of the satiric poet,
Gall from out his blackest well,
Shuddering, unescapeable.
But if still, as I ought to do,
I love any wine iced through and through,

If I will have it (and none beside)
Superultrafrostified,
He that reigns in Pindus then,
Visible Phœbus among men,
Filicaia, shall exalt
Me above the starry vault;
While the other swans divine,
Who swim with their proud hearts in wine,
And make their laurel groves resound
With the names of the laurel-crown'd,
All shall sing, till our goblets ring,
Long live Bacchus our glorious King!
Evoè! let them roar away!
Evoè!
Evoè!
Evoè! let the lords of wit
Rise and echo where they sit,
Where they sit enthroned each,
Arbiters of sovereign speech,
Under the great Tuscan dame,
Who sifts the flower and gives it fame.
Let the shout by Segni be
Registered immortally,
And despatched by a courier
A monsieur l'Abbé Regnier.

What wine is that I see? Ah,
Bright as a John Dory:
It should be Malvagia,
Trebbia's praise and glory.
It is, i'faith, it is:
Push it nearer, prithee;
And let me, thou fair bliss,
Fill this magnum with thee.
I'faith, it's a good wine,
And much agrees with me:
Here's a health to thee and thy line,
Prince of Tuscany.

Before I speak of thee, Prince bold and sage,
I wash my lips with this illustrious wine,
Which, like thyself, came upon this our age,
Breathing a gentle suavity divine.
Hearken, great Cosmo. Heav'n has promis'd thee
Here, down on earth, eternity of glory;
And these, my oracular words, thine eyes may see,
Written already in immortal story.
When thou shalt leave us to return to Heav'n,
Laden with mighty deeds, and full of years,
To thine illustrious planet it is given
To roll round Jupiter, clear, grand, and even,
Flushing the brilliant Medicean stars;
And Jupiter himself, glad of thy sight,
Shall show a more distinguish'd orb, and affabler delight.
To the sound of the cymbal,
And sound of the crotalus,
Girt with your Nebrides,
Ho, ye Bassarides,
Up, up, and mingle me
Cups of that purple grape,
Which, when ye grapple, ye
Bless Monterappoli.
Then, while I irrigate
These my dry viscera,
For they burn inwardly,
Let my Fauns cleverly
Cool my hot head with their
Garlands of pampanus.
Then to the crash of your
Pipes and your kettle-drums,
Let me have sung to me,
Roar'd to me, rung to me,
Catches and love songs
Of wonderful mystery;
While the drunk Mænades,
And glad Egipani,
To the rude rapture and mystical wording
Bear a loud burden.

From the hill before us
Let the villagers raise o'er us
Clappings to our chorus;
And all around resound
Talabalács, tambourins, and horns,
And pipes, and bagpipes, and the things you know, boys,
That cry out Ho-boys!
While with a hundred kits about their ears,
A hundred little rustic foresters
Strum, as they ought to do, the Dabbuda,
And sing us, and dance us, the Bombababa.
And if in your singing it,
Dancing and flinging it,
Any of ye tire awhile,
And become savage for
Greedy-great thirstiness,
Down on the grass again,
Let the feast flow again,
Falderallalling it
With quips and triple rhymes,
Motetts and Couplets,
Sonnets and Canticles;
Then for the pretty plays
Of Flowers and What Flowers;
And ever and always
We'll quaff at our intervals
Cups of that purple grape,
Which when ye grapple, ye
Bless Monterappoli.
Ay, and we'll marry it
With the sweet Mammolo,
Which from the wine-press comes sparkling, and rushes,
In bottles and cellars, to hide its young blushes,
What time ripe Autumn, in the flush o' the sun,
Meets his friend Magalotti at the fountain,
The very fountain, and the very stone,
At which old Æson christened his lone mountain.

This well of a goblet, so round and so long,
So full of wine, so gallant and strong,

That it draws one's teeth in its frolics and freaks,
And squeezes the tears from the sides of one's cheeks,
Like a torrent it comes, all swollen and swift,
And fills one's throat like a mountain rift,
And dashes so headlong, and plays such pranks,
It almost threatens to burst the banks.
No wonder; for down from the heights it came,
Where the Fiesolan Atlas, of hoary fame,
Basks his strength in the blaze of noon,
And warms his old sides with the toasting sun.
Long live Fiesole, green old name!
And with his long life to thy sylvan fame,
Lovely Maiano, lord of dells,
Where my gentle Salviati dwells.
Many a time and oft doth he
Crown me with bumpers full fervently,
And I, in return, preserve him still
From every crude and importunate ill.
I keep by my side,
For my joy and my pride,
That gallant in chief of his royal cellar,
Val di Marina, the blithe care-killer;
But with the wine yclept Val di Botte,
Day and night I could flout me the gouty.
Precious it is I know, in the eyes
Of the masters, the masters, of those who are wise.
A glass of it brimming, a full-flowing cup,
Goes to my heart, and so lays it up,
That not my Salvini, that book o' the south,
Could tell it, for all the tongues in his mouth.
If Maggi the wise, the Milanese wit,
'Mid their fat Lombard suppers but lighted on it,
Even the people grossly cœnaculous,
Over a bumper would find him miraculous.

Maggi, whatever his readers may think,
Puts no faith in Hippocrene drink;
No faith in that lying-tongued water has he,
Nor goes for his crown to a sapless tree.

For other paths are his, far loftier ways:
He opens towards heav'n a road of roads,
Rare unto mortal foot, and only pays
His golden song to heroes and to gods.
And truly most heroic were his praise,
If, turning from his Lesmian, like a Cruscan,
He took to drinking Tuscan.
Drawn by the odour, won by the sweet body,
I see another leave his herds at Lodi,
And foot to foot with him sit to drink,
With plumpy cheeks, and pink, as blithe as any,
The shepherd of Leméne;
Ev'n him I say, who, ere he rank'd with men,
On bays and beeches carved, with happy stroke,
The strifes of the great Macaron; and then
The dotage of the boy over the brook.
And now he writeth in his riper years
Holier and lovelier things in starry characters.
But when he seats himself
Under an oak
To the sound of his piping,
He spins me off pastorals
And maketh eminent,
Lo! the red pride of that fair hill of his,
Whose foot the fond Lambro takes round with a kiss;
Even, I say, the hill of Colombano,
Where the vines, with their twisting legs,
Instead of elms, go making love to figs.

If anybody doesn't like Vernaccia,
I mean the sort that's made in Pietrafitta,
Let him fly
My violent eye;
I curse him, clean, through all the Alpha-beta.
I fine him, furthermore, for drink, alway
Brozzi, Quaracchi, and Peretola:
And for his shame and for his spite,
I think it right
To order him to wear that stupid sweet,
A crown of beet;

And on the palfrey of Silenus old,
I bid them set him the wrong way, and ride him,
While, all the way beside him,
A little insolent Satyr
Keeps an inveterate clatter
Hard on his back—videlicet, doth hide him.
Then let there be the worst of places found for him,
And all the boys got round for him,
And in his ears, till his whole spirit be gored,
The whole abuse of all the vintage poured.

On Antinoro's lofty-rising hill
(Yonder, that has its name from Roses,)
How could I sit! how could I sit, and fill
Goblets bright as ever blush'd
From the black stones of the Canajuol crush'd:
How it spins from a long neck out,
Leaps, and foams, and flashes about!
When I taste it, when I try it,
(Other lovely wines being by it,)
In my bosom it stirs, God wot,
Something—as I know not what—
But a little stirring fire,
Either delight, or else desire.
'Tis desire, to my thinking;
Yes, a new desire of drinking:
Something which the more one swallows,
Recommends the more that follows.
Pour then, pour, companions mine,
And in the deluge of mighty wine
Plunge with me, with cup and with can.
Ye merry shapes of Pan,
Ye furnishers of philosophic simile,
The goatibeardihornyfooted family.
Pour away, pour away,
Fill your gasping clay
With a pelting shower of wine;
Such as is sold
By the Cavalier bold
At the Deluge, that mighty sign.

He sells it, and all
To buy scents withal,
So fondly thinks he, in his perfumery,
A scent to discover, that shall be so fine,
As to rival the scent of the mighty wine.
A thousand scents inventeth he,
With fans and small upholstery;
He makes very sweet perfumes,
And fumigations for your rooms;
He makes powderets,
He makes odourets,
And all for certain marvellously;
But never shall he find out, minions mine,
A scent to match the mighty scent of wine,
From the summits of Peru,
From the forests of Tolu,
Let him lay
(I'll be bold to say)
A thousand drugs in, and more too,
Yet never shall he find out, Airy mine,
A scent to match the mighty scent of wine.
Smell, Ariadne; this is Ambra wine:
Oh what a manly, what a vital scent!
'Tis of itself a nourishment
To the heart, and to the brain above it;
But what is more, the lips, the lips, boys, love it.

This fine Pumino here
Smacks a little of the austere;
'Twere no respect to Bartlemytide
Not to have it at one's side;
No shame I feel to have it so near,
For shame it were to feel so much pride,
And leave it solely to the bumpkins,
To drink it at its natural time of pumpkins.
Yet every wine that hight
Pumino, hath no right
To take its place at one's round table:
I only do admit.
The gallant race of it,

Which bears Albizi's noble arms and label;
And which, descended of a chosen stock,
Keepeth the mind awake and clear from any sordid smoke.

Keepeth the mind awake and clear from any sordid smoke,
That cask ye lately broke,
On which a judgment I reveal,
From which lieth no appeal.—
But hold; another beaker,
To make me a fit speaker!—
And now, Silenus, lend thy lolling ears;—
Who will believe that hears?
In deep Gualfonda's lower deep, there lies
A garden for blest eyes;
A garden and a palace; the rich hold
Of great Riccardi, where he lives in gold.
Out of that garden with its billion-trillion
Of laughing vines, there comes—*such* a vermilion!
Verily it might face 'fore all the county,
The gallant carbuncle of Mezzomonte:
And yet, 'tis very well known I sometimes go
To Mezzomonte for a week or so,
And take my fill, upon the greeny grass,
Of that red laugher through the lifted glass,—
That laugher red, that liquid carbuncle,
Rich with its cordial twinkle,
That gem, which fits e'en the Corsini's worth,
Gem of the Arno, and delight o' the earth.

The ruby dew that stills
Upon Valdarno's hills,
Touches the sense with odours so divine,
That not the violet,
With lips with morning wet,
Utters such sweetness from her little shrine.
When I drink of it, I rise
Over the hill that makes poets wise,
And in my voice and in my song,
Grow so sweet and grow so strong,
I challenge Phœbus with his delphic eyes.

Give me then, from a golden measure,
The ruby that is my treasure, my treasure;
And like to the lark that goes maddening above,
I'll sing songs of love!
Songs will I sing more moving and fine,
Than the bubbling and quaffing of Gersole wine.
Then the rote shall go round,
And the cymbals kiss,
And I'll praise Ariadne,
My beauty, my bliss,
I'll sing of her tresses,
I'll sing of her kisses;
Now, now it increases,
The fervour increases,
The fervour, the boiling, and venomous bliss.
The grim god of war and the arrowy boy
Double-gallant me with desperate joy;
Love, love, and a fight!
I must make me a knight;
I must make me thy knight of the bath, fair friend,
A knight of the bathing that knows no end.
An order so noble, a rank so discreet,
Without any handle
For noise or for scandal,
Will give me a seat
With old Jove at his meat:
And thou made immortal, my beauty, my own,
Shall sit where the gods make a crown for his throne.

Let others drink Falernian, others Tolfa,
Others the blood that wild Vesuvius weeps;
No graceful soul will get him in the gulph o'
Those fiery deluging, and smoking steeps.
To-day, methinks, 'twere fitter far, and better, eh?
To taste thy queen, Arcetri;
Thy queen Verdea, sparkling in our glasses,
Like the bright eyes of lasses;
We'll see which is the prettier smiling varlet,
This, or Lappeggio with the lip of scarlet.
Hide it in cellars as it will, no matter;

The deeper rogues the sweeter.
Oh boys, this Tuscan land divine
Hath such a natural talent for wine,
We'll fall, we'll fall
On the barrels and all;
We'll fall on the must, we'll fall on the presses,
We'll make the boards groan with our grievous caresses;
No measure, I say; no order, but riot;
No waiting, nor cheating; we'll drink like a Sciot;
Drink, drink, and drink when you've done;
Pledge it, and frisk it, every one;
Chirp it and challenge it, swallow it down;
He that's afraid, is a thief and a clown.
Good wine's a gentleman;
He speedeth digestion all he can:
No headache hath he, no headache, I say,
For those who talked with him yesterday.
If Signor Bellini, besides his apes,
Would anatomize vines, and anatomize grapes,
He'd see that the heart that makes good wine,
Is made to do good, and very benign.
Ho—ho! tongue of mine,
Be steady to speak of the master's art,
Who taught thee how, and in what fine part
Of thyself, O tripping tongue,
The tip and the taste of all tasting hung.
Tongue, I must make thee a little less jaunty
In the wine robust that comes from Chianti.
True son of the earth is Chianti wine,
Born on the ground of a gipsy vine;
Born on the ground for sturdy souls,
And not the rank race of one of your poles;
I should like to see a snake
Get up in August out of a brake,
And fasten with all his teeth and caustic
Upon that sordid villain of a rustic,
Who, to load my Chianti's haunches
With a parcel of feeble bunches,
Went and tied her to one of these poles,—
Sapless sticks without any souls!

Like a king,
In his conquering,
Chianti wine with his red flag goes
Down to my heart, and down to my toes:
He makes no noise, he beats no drums;
Yet pain and trouble fly as he comes.
And yet a good bottle of Carmignan,
He of the two is your merrier man;
He brings from heav'n such a rain of joy,
I envy not Jove his cups, old boy.
Drink, Ariadne; the grapery
Was the warmest and brownest in Tuscany;
Drink, and whatever they have to say,
Still to the Naiads answer nay;
For mighty folly it were, and a sin,
To drink Carmignan with water in.

He who drinks water,
I wish to observe,
Gets nothing from me;
He may eat it and starve.
Whether it's well, or whether it's fountain,
Or whether it comes foaming white from the mountain,
I cannot admire it,
Nor ever desire it:
'Tis a fool, and a madman, an impudent wretch,
Who now will live in a nasty ditch,
And then grown proud, and full of his whims,
Comes playing the devil and cursing his brims,
And swells and tumbles, and bothers his margins,
And ruins the flowers, although they be virgins.
Moles and piers, were it not for him,
Would last forever
If they're built clever;
But no—it's all one with him—sink or swim.
Let the people yclept Mameluke
Praise the Nile without any rebuke;
Let the Spaniards praise the Tagus;
I cannot like either, even for negus.
If any follower of mine
Dares so far to forget his wine,

As to drink an atom of water,
Here's the hand should devote him to slaughter.
Let your meagre doctorlings
Gather herbs and such like things;
Fellows that with streams and stills
Think to cure all sorts of ills.
I've no faith in their washery,
Nor think it worth a glance of my eye:
Yes, I laugh at them for that matter,
To think how they, with their heaps of water,
Petrify their sculls profound,
And make 'em all so thick and so round,
That Viviana, with all his mathematics,
Would fail to square the circle of their attics.

Away with all water,
Wherever I come;
I forbid it ye, gentlemen,
All and some;
Lemonade water,
Jessamine water.
Our tavern knows none of 'em,
Water's a hum.
Jessamine makes a pretty crown;
But as a drink, 'twill never go down.
All your hydromels and flips
Come not near these prudent lips.
All your sippings and sherbets,
And a thousand such pretty sweets,
Let your mincing ladies take 'em,
And fops whose little fingers ache 'em
Wine! Wine! is your only drink;
Grief never dares to look at the brink:
Six times a year to be mad with wine,
I hold it no shame, but a very good sign.
I, for my part, take my can,
Solely to act like a gentleman;
And acting so, I care not, I,
For all the hail and the snow in the sky;

I never go poking,
And cowering and cloaking,
And wrapping myself from head to foot,
As some people do, with their wigs to boot;
For example, like dry and shivering Redi,
Who looks like a peruk'd old lady.

Hallo! What phenomenon's this,
That makes my head turn round?
I'faith, I think it is
A turning of the ground!
Ho, ho, earth,
If that's your mirth,
It may not, I think, be amiss for me
To leave the earth, and take to the sea.
Hallo there, a boat! a boat!
As large as can float,
As large as can float, and stock'd plenteously;
For that's the ballast, boys, for the salt sea.
Here, here, here,—here's one of glass;
Yet through a storm it can dance with a lass.
I'll embark, I will,
For my gentle sport,
And drink as I'm used
'Till I settle in Port—
Rock, rock,—wine is my stock,
Wine is my stock, and will bring us to Port.
Row, brothers, row,
We'll sail and we'll go,
We'll all go sailing and rowing to Port—
Ariadne, to Por—to Port.
Oh what a thing
'Tis for you and for me,
On an evening in spring,
To sail in the sea.
The little fresh airs
Spread their silver wings,
And o'er the blue pavement
Dance love-makings.
To the tune of the waters, and tremulous glee,
They strike up a dance to people at sea.

Row, brothers, row,
We'll sail and we'll go.
We'll sail and we'll go, till we settle in Port—
Ariadne, in Por—in Port.
Pull away, pull away,
Without drag or delay:
No gallants grow tired, but think it a sport,
To feather their oars till they settle in Port—
Ariadne, in Por—in Port.
I'll give ye a toast,
And then, you know, you,
Arianeeny, my beauty, my queeny,
Shall sing me a little, and play to me too
On the mandòla, the coocooroocoo,
The coocooroocoo,
The coocooroocoo,
On the mandòla, coocooroocoo.
A long pu—
A strong pu—
A long pull, and strong pull, and pull altogether!
Gallants and boaters, who know how to feather,
Never get tired, but think it a sport,
To feather their oars till they settle in Port—
Ariadne, in Por—Port;
I'll give thee a toas—
I'll give thee a toast—and then, you know, you
Shall give me one too.
Araneeny, my quainty, my queeny,
Sing me, you ro—
Sing me, you ro—
Sing me, you rogue, and play to me, do,
On the viò—
On the viòla, the coocooroocoo,
The coocooroocoo,
The coocooroocoo,
On the viòla, the coocooroocoo.

What a horrible tempest arises!
This place is full of surprises;

Hissings and devils all around one's ears,
Like a crashing of fifty spheres!
Pilot, pilot, old boy, save
Boys of wine from a watery grave.
Alas, what signifies good advice!
The oars are broken, the last rope flies!
Winds grow madder,
The waves are at war;
Lighten the vessel, the lading! the lading!
Splice the main tackle, boys—heave up the mast!
The ship's agoing to the end of the world—
I think it will e'en go past.
What I say, I don't very well know;
I'm not *au fait* at the water:
But it seems—to me—that there's something the matter—
A breeze rather stiff or so:
The whirlwinds undoubtedly have come down
To crack the sea and all on the crown;
The billows foam like a world of beer:
And see—the sea-horses! they joust and they rear!
I'm sick!
We're all of us lost; that's settled at any rate:
Gods! how my stomach I loathe yet exonerate:—
Bitter! bitter!—and yet 'twas a stock
Precious as ever was put under lock!
I think I feel lighter—
We're safe! we're safe!
Look at the prow there! the golden-haired stars!
'Tis Castor and Pollux—that pair of pairs!
Ah—no—no—no stars are they;
No stars are they, though they be divine,
But a couple of flasks of exquisite wine!
Exquisite wine is your exquisite reason
For settling disorders that come out of season.
For clearing one's tempests, and brushing apart
Fogs and all that in "the lake of one's heart."
My pretty little Satyrs,
In your little hairy tatters,
Whoever is the first now,
To help me quench my thirst now,

Whoever hands me up
Some interminable cup,
Some new unfathom'd goblet,
To hubble it and bubble it,
I'll hold him for my minion,
And never change my opinion.
I don't care what it's made of,
Gold, ivory, or fig;
It may, or it may not, be the richest ever read of,
But let it be the biggest of the big.
A small glass, and thirsty! Be sure never ask it:
Man might as well serve up soup in a basket.
This my broad, and this my high
Bacchanalian butlery
Lodgeth not, nor doth admit
Glasses made with little wit;
Little bits of would-be bottles
Run to seed in strangled throttles.
Such things are for invalids,
Sipping dogs that keep their beds.
As for shallow cups like plates,
Break them upon shallower pates.
Such glassicles,
And vesicles,
And bits of things like icicles,
Are toys and curiosities
For babies and their gaping eyes;
Keepsakes, and small crystal caddies,
To hold a world of things for ladies;
I don't mean those who keep their coaches,
But those who make grand foot approaches,
With flower'd gowns, and fine huge brooches.
'Tis in a magnum's world alone
The graces have room to sport and be known.
Fill, fill, let us all have our will:
But with *what*, with *what*, boys, shall we fill?
Sweet Ariadne—no, not that one,—ah no:
Fill me the manna of Montepulciano:
Fill me a magnum, and reach it me.—Gods!
How it slides to my heart by the sweetest of roads!

Oh, how it kisses me, tickles me, bites me!
Oh how my eyes loosen sweetly in tears!
I'm ravish'd! I'm rapt! Heav'n finds me admissible!
Lost in an ecstasy! blinded! invisible!

Hearken, all earth!
We, Bacchus, in the might of our great mirth,
To all who reverence us, and are right thinkers:—
Hear, all ye drinkers!
Give ear, and give faith, to our edict divine—
MONTEPULCIANO'S THE KING OF ALL WINE.

At these glad sounds,
The Nymphs, in giddy rounds,
Shaking their ivy diadems and grapes,
Echoed the triumph in a thousand shapes.
The Satyrs would have joined them; but alas!
They couldn't; for they lay about the grass,
As drunk as apes.

TO GENOA.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF PASTORINI.

PROUD city, that by the Ligurian sea
Sittest as at a mirror, lofty and fair;
And towering from thy curving banks in air,
Scornest the mountains that attend on thee;
Why, with such structures, to which Italy
Has nothing else, though glorious, to compare,
Hast thou not souls, with something like a share,
Of look, heart, spirit, and ingenuity?

Better to bury at once ('twould cost thee less)
Thy golden-sweating heaps, where cramp'd from light,
They and their pinch'd fasts ply their old distress.
Thy rotting wealth, unspent, like a thick blight,
Clouds the close eyes of these:—dark hands oppress
With superstition those:—and all is night.

THE DEBT OF THE GIULI TRE.[188]

FROM CASTI.

I.

No: none are happy in this best of spheres.
Lo! when a child, we tremble at a look;
Our freshest age is wither'd o'er a book;
Then fine arts bite us, and great characters.
Then we go boiling with our youthful peers,
In love and hate, in riot and rebuke;
By hook misfortune has us, or by crook,
And griefs and gouts come thickening with one's years.

In fine, we've debts:—and when we've debts, no ray
Of hope remains to warm us to repose.
Thus has my own life pass'd from day to day;
And now, by way of climax, though not close,
The fatal debit of the *Giuli Tre*
Fills up the solemn measure of my woes.

II.

Often and often have I understood
From Galen's readers and Hippocrates's,
That there are certain seasons in diseases
In which the patient oughtn't to lose blood.
Whether the reason that they give be good,
Or doctors square their practice to the thesis,
I know not; nor is this the best of places
For arguing that matter as I could.

All that I know is this,—that *Giuli Tre*
Has no such scruple or regard with me,
Nor holds the rule himself: for every day
He does his best, and that most horribly,
To make me lose my cash; which, I must say,
Has with one's blood some strange affinity.

III.

Never did beetle hum so teasingly
About one's ears, in walking, when it's hot;
Never did fly return so to one spot,

As comes my teasing Creditor on me.
Let it but rain, for instance, and you'll see
The flies and beetles vanish like a shot;
But never comes the time,—the day is not,—
In which this vermin here will let me be.

Perhaps as bodies tend invariably
Tow'rds other bodies by some force divine,—
Attraction, gravity, or centripathy,
(God knows; I'm little vers'd in your right line,)
So by some natural horrid property
This pretty satellite tends tow'rds me and mine.

IV.

I've said forever, and again I say,
And it's a truth as plain as truth can be,
That from a certain period to this day,
Pence are a family quite extinct with me.
And yet you still pursue me, and waylay,
With your insufferable importunity,
And for those d——d infernal *Giuli Tre*
Haunt me without remorse or decency.

Perhaps you think that you'll torment me so
You'll make me hang myself? You wish to say
You saw me *sus. per coll.*—No, *Giuli*, no.
The fact is, I'll determine not to pay;
And drive you, *Giuli*, to a state so low,
That you shall hang yourself, and I be gay.

V.

Oh with what folly did they toil in vain,
Who thought old Arnold, Sully, or Gabor wise,
And night and day labour'd with earnest eyes
To turn their metals into Golden grain!
How did their pots and they perspire again
Over their sulphurs, salts, and mercuries,
And never, after all, could see their prize,
Or do what Nature does, and with no pain:

And yet, ah me! why, why, dear Nature say,
This lovely art—why must it be despis'd?
Why mayn't we follow this thy noblest way?
I'd work myself; and having realiz'd,
Great Heavens! a capital of *Giuli Tre*,
Break up my tools, content and aggrandiz'd.

VI.

My Creditor seems often in a way
Extremely pleasant with me, and polite;
Just like a friend.—You'd fancy, at first sight,
He thought no longer of the *Giuli Tre*.
All that he wants to know is, what they say
Of Frederick now; whether his guess was right
About the sailing of the French that night;
Or, what's the news of Hanover and D'Estrèe.

But start from whence he may, he comes as truly,
By little and little, to his ancient pass,
And says, "Well—when am I to have the *Giuli?*"
'Tis the cat's way. She takes her mouse, alas!
And having purr'd, and eyed, and tapped him duly,
Gives him at length the fatal *coup de grace*.

VII.

My Creditor has no such arms, as he
Whom Homer trumpets, or whom Virgil sings,
Arms which dismiss'd so many souls in strings,
From warlike Ilium and from Italy;
Nòr has he those of later memory,
With which Orlando did such loads of things;
But with hard hints, and horrid botherings,
And such rough ways,—with these he warreth me.

And suddenly he launcheth at me, lo!
His terrible demand the *Giuli Tre;*
I draw me back, and thrust him with a No!
Then glows the fierce resentment of the fray,
Till turning round, I scamper from the foe;
The only way, I find, to gain the day.

PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF.

FROM ALFIERI.

THOU lofty mirror, Truth, let me be shown
Such as I am, in body and in mind;
Hair plainly red, retreating now behind;
Of stature tall, head bent and looking prone;
A meagre body on two stilts of bone;
Fair skin, blue eyes, good air, nose well defined,
Mouth handsome, teeth such as are rare to find,
And paler in the face than king on throne.

Now harsh and bitter, pleasant now and mild;
A quickly rous'd yet no malignant foe;
My heart, and mind, and self, never in tune;
Sad for the most part, then in such a flow
Of spirits, I seem now hero, now buffoon;—
Man, art thou great or vile?—Die, and thou'lt know.

ENGLISH COURTSHIP.

FROM THE SAME.

Dialogue between a Chair in Italy and a Gentleman from England.

CHAIR.

WHAT is the reason, Sir, that every day
You load me thus for nothing, hours and hours?
Is this the manner, pray,
Of making love in that cold clime of yours?
You may be heavy for a century,
And get no further with the lovely she.

GENTLEMAN.

And hast thou too conspired against me, chair?
I love, 'tis true—too true—and dare not say it:
But surely my whole air,
My looks, my very silence, all display it:
Every one, doubtless, must perceive the fire,
That gnaws and eats me up with fierce desire.

CHAIR.

For God's sake, speak then, or you'll never do:
What you do now by the fair lady's side,
I boast of doing too:—
It makes me mad to find you thus tongue-tied,—
To see you sit and stare, like a stuck pig.
You make me speak myself, who am but fig.

LEARNING TUSCAN.

FROM THE SAME.

Dialogue between the Poet and his Florentine Laundress, Nera Colomboli.

A. WHY, Mistress Nera, what the devil's here?
To bring my stockings home at last undone?
N. Undone! Ah! God knows if I've sewn and sewn;
But they so *spider-web*, it's a despair.
A. So *spider-web*, schoolmistress! Why, that's queer.
N. How? Anything that we put off and on,
And wear and wear, till all the stuff is gone,
Doesn't it *spider-web?* I think it's clear.

A. *Spider-web?* I don't take it; what d'ye mean?
N. Lord bless me, Sir, break me a spider's web,
And see if I can sew it up again.
A. Ah! It is I that am the unlick'd cub.
I grow gray writing Tuscan, but in vain:
A sorry graft, fit only for the grub.

LITTLE PEOPLE PANEGYRIZED.

BY CARLO INNOCENZO FRUGONI.

[*Monthly Repository*, 1838, p. 281.]

FRUGONI, one of the minor Italian poets, and modest enough to claim no higher rank, was of a noble Genoese family, and born in the year 1692. He was put early into the church, but got permission to leave it, being of inclinations too pleasurable for the profession, and of a spirit too candid to act a part. The consequence was a life of mingled distress and enjoyment, which lasted till near eighty. He wrote an abundance of miscellaneous pieces, which his countrymen still have a

regard for; though his humour is of a cast which requires, perhaps, a certain scholarly delicacy on the reader's part, to give due effect to its lightness. The following effusion derives a grace from its being that of a man who was tall and bulky. He followed it with a *placamentation* of his big brethren, which, however, is not so good.

LITTLE people, hear my song:—
In your praise I'm very strong:
Great big people, go along.

In the first place, you're best made;
That's a truth can't be gainsaid;
And if it should be, who's afraid?

Beauty shows most art and grace,
When she works in little space;
'Tis her most praiseworthy case.

For the force, you see, compress'd,
Is forced to do its very best;
And so it's fam'd from east to west.

As to folks that threat the skies,
I never could, for all their size,
See whereabouts their merit lies.

Their make's all anti-symmetry,
All legs and arms; and grant they be
Handsome in face, what's that, *per se?*

They look like steeples, more extensive,
Than of brain-pan comprehensive:—
Their clothing must be very expensive.

Then their dancing! riding!—Oh!
For my part I should like to know
How they could ever be the go.

Now your small man does all smugly,
Fits in every corner snugly;
And if he's ugly, he's *less* ugly.

In peril who comes off so clean?
In a fight who more serene?
Besides he's very little seen.

Oh, littleness gives half their worth
To the rarest things on earth:
Pearls are ocean's prettiest birth.

But the big are rocks. To spy 'em
Makes the bravest that go nigh 'em
Pale, to think of passing by 'em.

Oranges are but small trees,
Yet, in pots, lo! how they please;
They're the garden's *protégés*.

But your mountain pines that throw one
At such distance, who would grow one
To adorn his window? No one.

Lastly, mastiffs. See how they,
Being big, must slink away,
Or at best fill kennels,—eh?

While your lap-dog, who refuses
To be larger than grace chooses,
All in ladies' linen snoozes.

Little people, one and all,
See if *now* your praise sings small;
See if *now* ye mind the tall.

To such reasons cut and dry,
Let their heads be ne'er so high,
What can they possibly reply?

THE ABBÉ AND HIS VALET.

FROM THE FRENCH OF CLEMENT MAROT.

Monsieur the Abbé, and Monsieur his valet,
Suit one another like straws in a pallet:
One's a whole fool, and t'other's a half;
One must be rallying, t'other must laugh;
One must have good wine, t'other hates bad,
And yet t'other morning, they quarrelled like mad;
For Monsieur the Abbé, in bed as he lies,
Must have his wine by him, or surely he dies;
While Monsieur his valet can sleep not a wink,
As long as he knows there's a drop left to drink.

ON THE LAUGH OF MADAME D'ALBRET.

FROM THE SAME.

Yes, that fair neck, too beautiful by half
Those eyes, that voice, that bloom, all do her honour;
Yet after all, that little giddy laugh
Is what, in my mind, sits the best upon her.

Good God! 'twould make the very streets and ways
Through which she passes, burst into a pleasure!
Did melancholy come to mar my days,
And kill me in the lap of too much leisure,
No spell were wanting, from the dead to raise me,
But only that sweet laugh, wherewith she slays me.

A LOVE-LESSON.

FROM THE SAME.

A sweet "No, no,"—with a sweet smile beneath
Becomes an honest girl: I'd have you learn it:—
As for plain "Yes," it may be said, 'ifaith,
Too plainly and too oft:—pray, well discern it.

Not that I'd have my pleasure incomplete,
Or lose the kiss for which my lips beset you;
But that in suffering me to take it, sweet,
I'd have you say, "No, no, I will not let you."

LIPS VERSUS EYES.

FROM THE FRENCH OF LA FONTAINE.

CYPRUS to wit: Sweet Lips *versus* Fine Eyes,
Before the Chamber of Precedencies.

The case was opened by Sweet Lips, who said,
"I summon Hearts. Let their reports be read.
Let them decide, my Lords, which of us two
Has most to say, to charm with, and to do.
Do, did I say? I'm ready to take oath,
I've more than I can do, though nothing loth:
Only it seems, I've not the happy art,
Of shedding tears, like Eyes! With all my heart:
My glory centres not in sight alone:
I satisfy three senses, they but one.
Odours and sounds to my sweet state belong,
And to delightful words I join a charming song.
My very sighs exhale a world of sweets,
Like zephyrs in the time of violets:
I have such ways to make a lover blest,
Such heaps—your Lordships will excuse the list:
And then, if Fine Eyes lay a wager with us,
To see who first can strike some heart beneath us,
Lord! how Fine Eyes go toiling round and round,
While, speak we but a word—the man's on ground:
We want no tricks, not we, to give the rosy wound.
Let Fine Eyes shut, they're no such wonder, they:
Sweet Lips has always treasures to display:
Coral without, and precious pearl within;
Who, when I deign to play, can hope to win?
Let presents fall in oriental showers,
The favours I bestow beat all their dowers.

Thirty-two pearls I wear about me here,
Of which the least in beauty and least clear,
Surpasses all with which the East is lit;
As many millions should not purchase it."

Thus spoke Sweet Lips: on which was seen to rise
A lover, who was counsel for Fine Eyes.

He said, as you may guess, that for their part,
Love, without them, could never find the heart:
That as to tears, he felt, he must own, shocked,
To hear their very tenderness rebuked.
What could sighs do, he should be glad to know,
Unless their warrants stood prepared to flow?
The fact was, both were good, and Sweet Lips there
Wrong'd her own cause, and hurt her character.
There are delicious tears; and there are sighs,
On t'other hand, not over good or wise;
And Lips had better, as she says she can,
Have gained the cause by silence than this plan.
What are the silent charms, the godlike powers,
To show for her cause, when compar'd with ours?
We charm a hundred and a thousand ways,
By sweetness, by a stealth, by sparkling rays,
And by what Sweet Lips blames—but is the part
We glory in the most—the gentle art
Of melting with a tear the manliest heart.
Where Sweet Lips gains a single conquest, we
Roll in a round of ceaseless victory:
And for one song in which she bears the prize,
A hundred thousand sparkle with Fine Eyes.
In courts and cities, in the poet's groves,
What is there heard of but our darts and loves?
Such sudden strokes we deal, such deeds we vaunt,
That those do well, who say that we enchant:
We come, and all surrender up their arms:
Though often in the whirl of those alarms,
Fine Lips comes following in, and then pretends her charms.
Heaven grant the people ask not who she is,
Or she may speak, and "thank the Gods amiss."

'Tis true, she has two words of magic touch,
"I love;" but cannot fine eyes say as much?
We have a tongue that with no words at all
Can ask, and hint, and tell a tale, and call,
And ravish more than all the pearls and songs,
Which Sweet Lips musters round her tongue of tongues."

The Counsel started here, and took occasion
To make a very happy peroration.
He caught a lady's eye, just coming in,
With an approach the sweetest ever seen:
He changed his tone, and with a gravity,
Seconded well by a reposing eye,
Said—"I've been taking up your Lordships' time
With trifling matters fitter for a rhyme;
Look there: my Lords, I think 'twould be absurd,
After that sight, to add another word.
Pray give the sentence:—we are quite secure:
My client would not tire the court, I'm sure."

The lady, with a pretty shame, look'd round
With speaking eyes, which dealt so wide a wound,
That all hands dropt their papers for surprise,
And not a heart but gave it for Fine Eyes.

Sweet Lips at this, seeing how matters went,
And forced to raise some new astonishment,
Resumed, and said—"To what has just been dropt,
(Which, by the way, is shockingly corrupt)
There is one word alone I wish to say!
My Lords, Fine Eyes do little but by day:
That silent tongue of theirs, when in the dark
Makes but a sorry kind of frigid spark:
What I can do, needs surely no remark."

This reason settled the dispute *instanter:*
Fine Eyes were much, but Sweet Lips the Enchanter.
Fine Eyes, however, took it in good part,
And Sweet Lips gave the Judge a kiss with all her heart.

THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS.

FROM THE LUTRIN OF BOILEAU.

THE subject of the *Lutrin* (*the Lectern*, or *Reading Desk*) is a dispute between the Chanter and Treasurer (or Dean) of a Cathedral Chapel in Paris, respecting the right of having a desk of that description in the Choir, and of giving the benediction. If the Chanter can succeed in publicly giving the benediction to the Dean himself, he thinks he shall establish that privilege without further trouble; on the other hand, if the Dean can get the start of him, and bless the Chanter, his predominance is secured for ever.

Luckily for the Dean, whenever he and the Chanter are together, and a multitude assembled, he enjoys, from prescription, the greater influence; and how he gains his end accordingly, is set forth in the ensuing Battle of the Books, which is the original of Swift's prose satire. Boileau is quite at home in it. It gives him an opportunity, as Warton observes, of indulging in his favourite pastime of ridiculing bad authors. This perhaps is the liveliest and most inventive passage in all the *Lutrin*; and it may be fairly pitted against the Battle of the Beaux and Ladies in the *Rape of the Lock*, being at once more satirical, probable, and full of life. If Pope's mock-heroic excels in delicacy and fancy (which I cannot but think it does, out and out), Boileau's may lay claim to a jollier and robuster spirit of ridicule, and to a greater portion of what the French call *movement*.

MEANWHILE the canons, far from all this noise,
With rapid mouthfuls urge the hungry joys:
With flowing cups and irritating salt,
Their thirst by turns they lay and they exalt:
Fervent they feed, with palate and with eye;
Through all its caverns gapes a monstrous ven'son pie.

To these Fame comes, and hastens to relate
The law consulted and the threaten'd fate:
Up starts the chief, and cries "Consult we too!"
With bile and claret strove his sudden hue.
Groans Everard from the board untimely torn,
But far away among the rest is borne.

A short and secret passage knew the band;
Through this they ruffle, and soon reach the stand,
Where Barbin, bookseller of equal eye,
Sells good and bad to all who choose to buy.
Proud up the platform mount the valiant train
Making loud way, when lo! so fates ordain,

As proud, and loud, and close at hand are seen
The fervid squadron, headed by the Dean.
The chiefs approaching, show a turbid grace ;
They measure with their eyes, they fume, they face ;
And, had they hoofs, had paw'd upon the place.

Thus two proud bulls, whom equal flames surprise
For some fair heifer with her Juno's eyes,
Forget their pasture, meet with horrid bows,
And stooping, threaten with their stormy brows.

But the sad Everard, elbow'd as he pass'd,
No longer could endure his demi-fast.
Plung'd in the shop, he seizes on a book,
A "Cyrus"[189] (lucky in the first he took),
And aiming at the man (Boirude was he)
Launch'd at his head the chaste enormity.
Boirude evaded, graz'd in cheek alone,
But Sidrac's stomach felt it with a groan.
Punch'd by the dire "Artamenes," he fell
At the dean's feet, and lay incapable.
His troop believe him dead, and with a start
Feel their own stomachs for the wounded part.

But rage and fear alike now rouse their gall,
And twenty champions on the murd'rer fall.
The Canons, to support the shock, advance :
On every side ferments the direful dance ;
Then Discord gives a roar, loud as when meet
Two herds of rival graziers in a street.
The bookseller was out, the troops rush in,
Fast fly his quartos, his octavos spin.
On Everard most they fall as thick as hail,
As when in spring the stony showers prevail,
And beat the blossoms till the season fail.
All arm them as they can : one gives a scotch
With "Love's Decree ;" another, with the "Watch ;"
This a French "Tasso" flings, a harmless wound,
And that the only "Jonas" ever bound.

The boy of Barbin vainly interferes,
And thrusts amidst the fray his generous ears:
Within, without, the books fly o'er and o'er,
Seek the dipp'd heads, and thump the dusty floor,
And strew the wondering platform at the door.
Here, with Guarini, Terence lies; and there
Jostles with Xenophon the fop La Serre.
Oh what unheard-of books, what great unknowns,
Quitted that day their dusty garrisons!
You, "Almerinde and Simander," mighty twins,
Were there, tremendous in your ancient skins:
And you, most hidden "Caloander," saw
The light for once, drawn forth by Gaillerbois,
Doubtful of blood, each handles his brain-pan:
On every chair there lies a clergyman.
A critical "Le Vayer" hits Giraut
Just where a reader yawns, and lays him low.
Marin, who thought himself translator proof,
On his right shoulder feels a dire Brebeuf;
The weary pang pervades his arm; he frowns,
And damns the "Lucan" dear to country towns.
Poor Dodillon, with senses render'd thick
By a "Pinchêne" in quarto, rises sick;
Then walks away. Him scorn'd in vain Garagne,
Smitten in forehead by a "Charlemagne:"
O wonderful effect of sacred verse!
The warrior slumbers where he meant to curse.
Great glory with a "Clelia," Bloc obtain'd;
Ten times he threw it, and ten times regain'd.

But nought, Fabri, withstood thy bulky Mars,
Thou Canon, nurs'd in all the church's wars.
Big was Fabri, big-bon'd, a large divine;
No water knew his elemental wine.
By him both Gronde and Gourme were overthrown,
And tenor Gras, and Gros the barytone,
And Gervis, bad except in easy parts,
And Gigue, whose alto touch'd the ladies' hearts.

At last the Singers, turning one and all,
Fly to regain the loopholes of the Hall:

So fly from a gray wolf, with sudden sweep,
The bleating terrors of a flock of sheep;
Or thus, o'erborne by the Pelidean powers,
The Trojans turning sought their windy towers.
Brontin beheld, and thus address'd Boirude:
"Illustrious carrier of the sacred wood,[190]
Thou, who one step didst never yet give way,
Huge as the burthen was, and hot the day;
Say, shall we look on this inglorious scene,
And bear a Canon conquering a Dean?
And shall our children's children have it said,
The rochet's dignity, through us, fell dead?
Ah, no; disabled though I thus recline,
A carcase still, and a Quinaut are mine;
Accept the covert of my bulk, and aim;
A blow may crown thee with a David's fame."
He said,—and tended him the gentle book;
With ardour in his eyes the sexton took.
Then lurk'd, then aim'd, and right between the eyes
Hit the great athlete, to his dumb surprise.
O feeble storm! O bullet, not of lead!
The book, like butter, dumps against his head.
With scorn the Canon chafed: "Now mark," said he,
"Ye secret couple, base and cowardly;
See if this arm consents against the foe
To launch a book, that softens in the blow."

He said; and on an old Infortiat seiz'd,[191]
In distant ages much by lawyers greas'd,—
A huge black-letter mass, whose mighty hoards
More mighty look'd, bound in two ponderous boards.
Half sides of old black parchment wooed the grasp,
And from three nails there hung the remnant of a clasp.
To heave it on its shelf, among the I's,
Would take three students of the common size.
The Canon, nathless, rais'd it to his head,
And on the pair, now crouching and half dead,
Sent with both hands the wooden thunder down:
Groan the two warriors, clashing in the crown,

And murder'd and undone with oak and nails,
Forth from the platform roll, and seek the guttery vales.

The Dean, astonish'd at a fall so dire,
Utters a cry as when the punch'd expire.
He curses in his heart all devilish broils,
And making awful room, six steps recoils.
Not long :—for now all eyes encountering his,
To see how Deans endure calamities,
Like a great chief he makes no further stand,
But drawing from his cloak his good right hand,
And stretching meek the sacred fingers twain,
Goes blessing all around him, might and main.
He knows full well, not only that the foe
Once smitten thus, can neither stand nor go,
But that the public sense of their defeat
Must leave him lord, in church as well as street.
The crowd already on his side he sees;
The cry is fierce, "Profane ones, on your knees:"
The Chanter, who beheld the stroke from far,
In vain seeks courage for a sacred war:
His heart abandons him: he yields, he flies;
His soldiers follow with bewilder'd eyes:
All fly, all fear, but none escape the pain;
The conqu'ring fingers follow and detain.
Everard alone, upon a book employ'd,
Had hoped the sacred insult to avoid;
But the wise chief, keeping a side-long eye,
And feigning to the right to pass him by,
Suddenly turn'd, and facing him in van,
Beyond redemption bless'd th' unhappy man.
The man, confounded with the mortal stroke,
From his long vision of rebellion woke,
Fell on his knees in penitential wise,
And gave decorum what he owed the skies.

Home trod the Dean victorious, and ordain'd
The resurrection of the desk regain'd:
While the vain Chapter, with its fallen crest,
Slunk to its several musings, *lost* and *bless'd*.

MARRIAGE À LA MODE.

FROM THE FRENCH OF MASSON DE MORVILLIERS.

Tom, you should take a wife—*Now love forbid !*
I found you one last night.—*The devil you did !*
Softly; perhaps she'll please you.—*Oh, of course !*
Fifteen.—*Alarming !*—Witty.—*Nay, that's worse !*
Discreet.—*All show !*—Handsome.—*To lure the fellows !*
High-born.—*Ay, haughty !*—Tender-hearted.—*Jealous !*
Talents o'erflowing,—*Ay, enough to sluice me !*
And then, Tom, such a fortune !—*Introduce me.*

LOVE AND AGE.

FROM MADAME D'HOUDETOT.

When young, I lov'd. At that enchanting age,
So sweet, so short, love was my sole delight;
And when I reach'd the time for being sage,
Still I lov'd on, for reason gave me right.

Snows come at length, and livelier joys depart,
Yet gentle ones still kiss these eyelids dim;
For still I love, and love consoles my heart;
What could console me for the loss of Him ?

A WISE DEATH.

FROM THE FRENCH.

'Tis done; I yield; adieu, thou cruel fair;
Adieu, th' averted face, th' ungracious check;
I go to die, to finish all my care,
To hang.—To hang ?—Yes,—round another's neck.

THE CURATE AND HIS BISHOP.

FROM THE FRENCH. WRITTEN DURING THE OLD REGIME.[192]

On business call'd from his abode,
A curate jogg'd along the road.
In patient leanness jogg'd his mare;
The curate, jogging, breath'd a prayer;
And jogging as she fac'd the meads,
His maid, behind him, told her beads.

They hear a carriage, it o'ertakes 'em;
With grinding noise and dust it rakes 'em;
'Tis he himself! they know his port;
My Lord the Bishop, bound to court.
Beside him to help meditation,
The lady sits, his young relation.

The carriage stops! the curate doffs
His hat, and bows; the lady coughs:
The prelate bends his lordly eyes,
And "How now, sir!" in wrath he cries;
"What! choose the very King's highway,
And ride with girls in open day!
Good heav'ns! what next will curates do?
My fancy shudders at the view.—
Girl, cover up your horrid stocking:
Was ever seen a group so shocking!"

"My Lord," replies the blushing man,
"Pardon me, pray, and pardon Anne;
Oh deem it, good my lord, no sin:
I had no coach to put her in."

NOTES.

NOTE 1, page 5.

The arms of the Malatesta family.

NOTE 2, page 14.

The famous story in Boccaccio and Dryden.

NOTE 3, page 33.

This is the portion of the *Story of Rimini*, as first written, for which (together with other passages, and some points in the character of the heroine,) the author has finally felt himself bound to substitute the refashionment of that poem, as reprinted in the present volume. He could not but be convinced, on a reconsideration of the passage in Dante, where Francesco laments the mode of her death, that the circumstances under which the catastrophe of the story took place in the original poem, were inconsistent with historical fact; and he has never ceased to be of opinion, that in a narrative professing to relate facts, facts must not be falsified.

As many a catastrophe, however, in real life, resembles many another in its causes, if not in itself, and as readers whom it was an honour to please, expressed regret, when the refashionment first appeared, at missing verses to which they had been accustomed, the portion is here inserted, as the fragment of a different poem.

The reader therefore will be good enough to suppose, that the unwritten portion of the story entitled *Corso and Emilia* would have resembled, in the first causes of its tragedy, those which are related in the *Story of Rimini*, but that as two whole poems could not well have been written by the same author on subjects so nearly resembling each other, one only of the two is given entire, and the other as a fragment.

The persons in the fragment are Corso Frangipani, a young Roman prince; Lorenzo, the head of the family, his brother; and Emilia, a princess of Ferrara, wife to Lorenzo.

NOTE 4, page 33.

This fragment, and the greater portion of the poem to which it originally belonged, were written in the prison to which the author, then editor of the *Examiner*, was condemned, under a Tory government, for anticipating the judgment of posterity in some remarks on the Prince Regent, afterwards George the Fourth.

Freedom of speech at that time was not allowed to the press in England, as abundantly and wisely as it is now; and the state of the author's health was such as to render confinement more than ordinarily injurious.

NOTE 5, page 50.

"What is said of that Taurus which is so called by us, extending beyond Armenia, (though this has been called in question,) is now made apparent from the panthers, which I know have been taken in the spice-bearing part of Pamphylia; for they delighting in odours, which they scent at a great distance, quit Armenia, and cross the mountains in search of the tears of the storax, at the time when the wind blows from that quarter, and the trees distil their gums. It is said a panther was once taken in Pamphylia, with a gold chain about its neck, on which was inscribed, in Armenian letters, 'Arsaces the king, to the Nysæan God.' Arsaces was then king of Armenia, who is supposed to have given it its liberty on account of its magnitude, and in honour of Bacchus, who, amongst the Indians, is called Nysius, from Nysa, one of their towns; this, however, is an appellation which he bears among all the oriental nations. This panther became subject to man, and grew so tame, that it was patted and caressed by every one. But on the approach of spring, a season when panthers become susceptible of love, it felt the general passion, and rushed with fury into the mountains in quest of a mate, with the gold chain about its neck."—*Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, p. 68.

NOTE 6, page 52.

This is Mahmoud, the Gaznevide, whose history has been told by Gibbon. The version of the noble and affecting adventure, here repeated, was suggested by a perusal of it in Gibbon's authority, the *Bibliothèque Orientale* of D'Herbelot, a book to which the author takes this opportunity of expressing his gratitude for many an hour of comfort.

NOTE 7, page 56.

A spiced wine, much in request during times of chivalry.

NOTE 8, page 89.

The *Palfrey* was originally published in a book by itself.

NOTE 9, page 90.

"Lions' Street took its name from the building and courts wherein were kept the King's great and small lions. One day, whilst Francis the First amused himself with looking at a combat between his lions, a lady having let her glove drop, said to De Lorges, 'If you would have me believe that you love me as much as you swear you do, go and recover my glove.' De Lorges went down, took up the glove in the midst of these furious animals, returned, and threw it in the lady's face; and notwithstanding all the advances she made, and all the arts she used, would never see her afterwards."—*Historical Essays upon Paris, translated from the French of M. de Saint Foix.*

NOTE 10, page 90.

King Francis and his "sport" are here spoken of according to the tone of their own times.

Note 11, page 94.

For reasons given in the Preface to the present edition, these notes and authorities are now added.

Note 12, page 103.

Since this paragraph was written, I need not say what a name Mr. Carlyle has procured himself by his writings on the "French Revolution," &c.

Note 13, page 111.

Gasping, staring, treading red mud,
Till the drunkenness' self makes us steady of blood.

"In action man is quite another being. * * The soul rises above its wonted serenity, into a kind of frenzied apathy to the scene before you—a heroism bordering on ferocity; the nerves become tight and contracted, *the eye full and open, moving quickly in its socket, with almost maniac wildness; the head is in constant motion, the nostrils extended wide, and the mouth apparently gasping.*"

"In many places the dead lay four deep upon each other, marking the spot some British square had occupied, when exposed for hours to the murderous fire of a French battery. Outside, lancer and cuirassier were scattered thickly on the earth. Madly attempting to force the bayonets of the British, they had fallen in the bootless essay by the musketry of the inner files. Further on, you traced the spot where the cavalry of France and England had encountered. Chasseur and hussar were intermingled, and the heavy Norman horse of the imperial guard were interspersed with the grey chargers which had carried Albin's chivalry. There the Highlander and tirailleur lay, side by side, together; and the heavy dragoon, with "green Erin's" badge upon his helmet, was grasped in death by the Polish lancer.

"On the summit of the ridge, the ground lay cumbered with dead, and *trodden, fetlock deep, in mud and gore.*"—Booth's *Accounts of Waterloo*, p. xlii.

Note 14, page 111.

See where comes the horse-tempest again,
Visible earthquake, bloody of mane!
Part are upon us, with edges of pain;
Part burst, riderless, over the plain,
Crashing their spurs, and twice slaying the slain.

Campbell, the poet, during the first wars of the revolution, saw the French army, under Moreau, enter Hohenlinden after defeating the Austrians. The cavalry were wiping their bloody swords on the manes of their horses.

"Thousands of wounded horses were strewn over this scene of slaughter. Some lay quietly on the ground, cropping the grass within their reach; *some with deep moanings, expressed their sufferings; while others, maddened with pain,*

"Jerked out their armed heels at their dead masters,
Killing them twice."—Booth's *Waterloo.*

Note 15, page 111.

Which is the beast, and which is the brother?

See any picture of such a *mêlée* in paintings or engravings; and consider it, not with the "eye of an artist," but with the feelings of a fellow-creature.

The circumstance of "lolling the tongues out," during a charge of bayonets, on a hot and exhausting day, was told me in my youth on the authority of a soldier who had served in Holland.

Note 16, page 111.

An odour, as of a slaughter-house,
The distant raven's dark eye bows.

"The smell which hung not only about the interior, but the exterior of the cottage, was shocking. Not that the dead had as yet begun to putrefy; for though some of them had lain for a couple of days exposed to the influence of the atmosphere, the weather was far too cold to permit the progress of decomposition to commence; but the odour, even of an ordinary field of battle, is extremely disagreeable. I can compare it to nothing more aptly than the interior of *a butcher's slaughter-house*, soon after he may have killed his sheep or oxen for the market. Here, that species of perfume was peculiarly powerful; and it was not the less unpleasant that the smell of burning was mixed with it."—Booth's *Waterloo*.

Note 17, page 114.

. . . . . In vain
His tongue still thirsts to lick the rain,
That mock'd but now his homeward tears;
And ever and anon he rears
His legs and knees with all their strength,
And then as strongly thrusts at length.
Rais'd, or stretch'd, he cannot bear
The wound that girds him, weltering there:
And "Water!" he cries, with moonward stare.

"Some poor fellows (among the wounded) could be seen *raising their knees up to their chins, and then flinging them down with all their might*. Some attempted to rise, but failed in the attempt. One poor fellow I saw get on his legs, put his hand to his bleeding head, then fall, and roll down the hill to rise no more."—*Memoirs of John Shipp*.

For "Water," which is the universal cry of the wounded on a field of battle, see an anecdote from Southey in the "Remarks on War."

Note 18, page 115.

"Water! water!" all over the field:
To nothing but death will that wound-voice yield.
One, as he crieth, &c.
Come hither, ye cities: ye ball-rooms, take breath!
See what a floor hath the Dance of Death.

"A few stragglers of each party still continued engaged, and this part of the affray took place within twenty yards of us. One of our

dragoons came to the water with a frightful wound; *his jaw was entirely separated from the upper part of his face, and hung on his breast*; the poor fellow made an effort to drink in that wretched condition."—COOKE'S *Peninsular War*, vol. i. p. 173.

"I ran towards the large breach (at Ciudad Rodrigo), and met an officer slowly walking between two soldiers of the rifle corps. I asked who it was, when he faintly replied, 'Uniacke,' and walked on. *One of his eyes was blown out, and the flesh was torn off his arms and legs.* He had taken chocolate with our mess an hour and a half before! He died in excruciating agony."—COOKE, vol. i. p. 121.

"One round shot had struck down seven of the enemy on the left of the road; some of them were dead; others still alive, with either legs or arms knocked off, or otherwise horribly mutilated, and were crying out in extreme anguish, *and imploring the soldiers to shoot them, and put an end to their dreadful sufferings.* A German hussar, in our service, answered them that they would be kindly treated by our medical officers. 'No! no!' they vociferated, 'we cannot bear to live. Countrymen, we are Germans; pray kill us, and shorten our miseries.'"—COOKE, vol. i. p. 279.

Speaking of a man who was hacked and hewed for being a spy, the author says, "This poor fellow, it was supposed by the medical men, must have died a death of extreme agony, *for the ground under him was dug up with his struggling under the torture which had been inflicted on him.*"—*Id.*

"When such evidence of destruction was apparent at a distance from the field, what a display of devastation the narrow theatre of yesterday's conflict must have presented. Fancy may conceive it; but description must necessarily be scanty and imperfect. On the small surface of two square miles, it was ascertained that 50,000 *men and horses were lying.* The luxurious crop of *grain*, which had covered the field of battle, was *reduced to litter and beaten into the earth*; and the surface trodden down by the cavalry, and furrowed deeply by cannon wheels, was strewn with many a relic of the fight. *Helmets and cuirasses, scattered fire-arms and broken swords, all the variety of military ornaments*, lancers' caps and Highland bonnets, uniforms of every colour, *plume and pennon, musical instruments*, the apparatus of artillery, drums, bugles; but, good God, why dwell on the harrowing picture of a slaughter-field? Each and every ruinous display bore a mute testimony to the miseries of such a battle."—BOOTH'S *Waterloo.*

NOTE 19, page 116.

What are those dark shapes, flitting about?
Their prey is lucre, their claws a knife,
Some say they take the beseeching life:
Horrible pity is theirs for despair,
And they the love-sacred limbs leave bare.

Alluding to followers of the camp, and others, who rifle the field after the battle, and who are understood to kill as well as plunder. Some have been said to be females! so brutalizing is war. Smollett, as if in excuse for the execrable nature of his hero, "Count Fathom," has made one of these his mother. She is shot by a dying dragoon, while about to despatch him herself!

"The dead could not be numbered; and by those who visited this dreadful field of glory and of death (Waterloo) the day after the battle, the spectacle of horror that it exhibited can never be forgotten. *The mangled and lifeless bodies were even then stripped of every covering.* Everything of the smallest value was already carried off."—COOKE.

NOTE 20, page 116.

Turn away, thou Love, nor weep
More in covering his last sleep;
Thou hast him:—blessed is thine eye!
Friendless Famine has yet to die.

"The battle of Waterloo was fought on a Saturday. The last numbers of the wounded were not carried off the field till the following Thursday. Imagine what they must have suffered meanwhile, not only from the agony of their wounds, but from thirst and starvation!

"The road between Waterloo and Brussels, which passes for nine miles through the thick forest of Soignes, was choked up with scattered baggage, broken wagons, and dead horses. The heavy rains, and the great passage upon it, had rendered it almost impassable, so that it was with extreme difficulty that the carriages containing the wounded could be brought along. The way was lined with unfortunate men, who had crept from the field, and many, unable to go farther, lay down and died: holes dug by the road-side served as their graves, and the road, weeks after the battle, was strewn with the tattered remains of their clothes and accoutrements. In every village and hamlet, on every road, in every part of the country, *for thirty miles round, wounded soldiers were found wandering;* the wounded Belgic and Dutch stragglers exerted themselves as much as possible to reach their own homes. So great were the numbers of the wounded, that, notwithstanding the most active and unremitted exertions, the last were not removed from the field of battle into Brussels *till the Thursday following.*"—Page xxxii.

"I will not attempt to describe the scene of slaughter which the fields presented, or what any person possessed of the least spark of humanity must have felt, while we viewed the dreadful situation of *some thousands of wounded wretches, who remained without assistance through a bitter cold night, succeeded by a day of most scorching heat.* English and French were dying by the side of each other, and I have no doubt hundreds, who were not discovered when the dead were buried, and who were unable to crawl to any habitation, must have perished by famine."—Page xlii.

NOTE 21, page 116.

Two noble steeds lay side by side,
One cropp'd the meek grass ere it died;
Pang-struck it struck t'other, already torn,
And out of its bowels that shriek was born.

I have mislaid the memorandum recording this appalling circumstance. The horse rarely utters a voice, even in health and joy, which renders its cry of agony particularly horrific.

NOTE 22, page 117.

Now see what crawleth, well as it may,
Out of the ditch, and looketh that way.

" The grass caught fire ; the wounded were by ;
Writhing till eve did a remnant lie ;
Then feebly this coal abateth his cry ;
But he hopeth ! he hopeth ! joy lighteth his eye,
For gold he possesseth, and Murder is nigh !"

He hopes to be put out of his misery by the wretches before mentioned.

" About six o'clock in the evening a dreadful occurrence took place. *The long dry grass took fire*, and the flames, spreading rapidly over the field of action, *a great number of the wounded were scorched to death.* For those who escaped, a large hospital was established in the town of Talavera."—*Peninsular Campaign*, vol. ii. p. 244.

" The French as well as the British soldiers, at the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, were carried up into the air, or jammed amongst the rubbish, some with heads, arms, or legs, sticking out of the earth. I saw one of the unfortunate soldiers in a blanket, with *his face, head, and body as black as a coal, and cased in a black substance like a shell* ; his features were no longer distinguishable, and all his hair was singed from off his head, but still the unfortunate man was alive. *How long he lived in this horrible situation I cannot say.*"—COOKE, vol. i. p. 128.

" As we moved off, the dead and the dying lay under the trees (the trunks of many of them in flames), pale and shivering, with their bloody congealed bandages, *imploring us not to leave them in that horrible situation, in the middle of the forest in the depth of winter. However, to attempt to afford them assistance was impossible.* Every individual had enough to do to drag himself along, after three days' privation."—COOKE, vol. i. p. 239.

" Two of our men, and four sepoys of the 70th, in the unthinking way peculiar to the lower classes, went and sat down by one of the ammunition wagons we had captured, when the Europeans took out their pipes, and began to smoke ; a spark communicated with the powder, and the whole blew up, leaving these six poor fellows hopelessly scorched on the ground. One man's head was blown off, and he was the happiest of the whole—for the agony the others must have suffered is indescribable. One of them started up and commenced running about all in flames, until, overcome with the torment, he fell to the ground. All this time no one dared to go near him, as his ammunition pad was in a blaze, and had not yet exploded. It was fearful to see the flames eating into his vitals, and his unavailing struggles to free himself from them. At last I saw a piece of a tent lying on the ground, which I snatched up and threw over him : but there was no hope for him. All of them, in their agony, had torn off every stitch of clothing ; and the black and scorched flesh hanging in strips—their withered tongues protruding from their mouths, in which the blood was gurgling, as they gasped for breath—their faces like blackened masks, and their eyes starting from their sockets—their groans, and the screams for water, with which they pointed to their parched mouths, showed a frightful picture of some of the horrors attendant upon war. They were all taken to the hospital instantly ; but none was likely to recover. I hope I may never witness such a sight again—excruciating suffering without the power of rendering assistance. The commander-in-chief came down the line just after this catastrophe, and we stood to our arms and cheered

him as he passed "—*Journal of a Subaltern during the Campaign in the Punjab.* (*Extracted into the "Manchester Examiner," and "Times."*)

NOTE 23, page 117.

Piles of pale beds for the 'spitals, &c.
From others, faint blood shall in families flow,
With wonder at life, and young oldness in woe,
Yet hence may the movers of great earth grow.

It is forgotten, amidst the medals, and titles, and annual feasts, and other "glories" that follow the miseries of war, how many maimed and blood-saddened men are still suffering in hospitals and private houses; and how much offspring, in all probability, is rendered sickly and melancholy. The author of the present poem believes that he owes the worst part of his constitution to the illness and anxiety caused to one of the best of mothers, by the American war.

NOTE 24, page 117.

Feeding the flowers and the feeding corn.

"Every tree in the wood of Hougoumont is pierced with balls; in one alone, I counted the holes where upwards of twenty had lodged. But the strokes which were fatal to human life have not actually injured them; though their trunks are filled with balls, and their branches broken and destroyed, their verdure is still the same. Wild flowers are still blooming, and wild raspberries ripening beneath their shades; *while huge black piles of human ashes, dreadfully offensive in smell, are all that now remain of the heroes who fought and fell upon the fatal spot.* Beside some graves, at the outskirts of this wood, the little wild flower, *Forget-me-not*—('mysostis arvensis,') was blooming, and the flaring red *poppy* had already sprung up around, and even upon them, as if in mockery of the dead."—BOOTH'S *Waterloo*, p. xix.

NOTE 25, page 117.

And he hasteth a tear from his old gray eye.

The tears of an old soldier for the fate of his comrades are some of the most affecting in the world, and do him immortal honour; far more honour than thousands of things which are considered more glorifying.

"They parted! Blucher proceeded on his way—Lord Wellington returned to Waterloo. As he crossed again the fatal scene, on which the silence of death had now succeeded to the storm of battle, the moon breaking from dark clouds shed an uncertain light upon this wide field of carnage, covered with mangled thousands of that gallant army, whose heroic valour had won for him the brightest wreath of victory, and left to future time an imperishable monument of their country's fame. He saw himself surrounded by the bloody corpses of his veteran soldiers, who had followed him through distant lands—of his friends—of his associates in arms—his companions through many an eventful year of danger and of glory; in that awful pause which follows the mortal conflict of man with man, emotions, unknown or stifled in the heat of battle, forced their way; the feelings of the man triumphed over those of the general, and in the very hour of victory, Lord Wellington burst into tears."

NOTE 26, page 117.

He slayeth, he wasteth, he spouteth his fires
On babes at the bosom, and bed-rid sires.

"Long ere the hour of the sun's decline, it grew as dark as midnight. About ten o'clock the terrific shelling commenced, every whistling shell bearing on its lighted wings messengers of death and desolation. I never saw these implements of destruction so accurately thrown—some of them scarcely five inches above the walls of the fort. In five minutes the screams of the women in the fort were dreadful. In places so confined, where numberless houses were crowded together, every shell must have found its way to some poor wretch's dwelling, and perhaps torn from mothers' bosoms their clinging babes. No person can estimate the dreadful carnage committed by shells, but those whose fate it has been to witness the effect of these messengers of death. On this occasion our shells were very numerous, and of enormous size, many of them thirteen inches and a half in calibre. The system of shelling had been so improved, in the twelve years which had elapsed since the siege of Bhurtpore, that, instead of about one shell in about five minutes from a single battery, it was by no means extraordinary to see twenty in one minute, from the numerous batteries which were brought to bear on this place. It was, at times, truly awful to see ten of these soaring in the air together, seemingly riding on the midnight breeze, and disturbing the slumbering clouds on their pillows of rest; all transporting to a destined spot the implements of havoc and desolation contained within their iron sides. The moon hid herself, in seeming pensiveness, behind a dense black cloud, as though reluctant to look on such a scene in its garb of blackest woe. Some carcaroes were also thrown. These, when in the air, are not unlike a fiery man soaring above. They are sent to burn houses, or blow up magazines. Far and wide they stretch forth their claws of death; and well might the poor natives call them devils of the night, or fiends of the clouds. To complete this dreadful scene, the roaring congreves ran along the bastion's top, breaking legs and arms, with their shaking tails. Nothing could be more grand to the eye, or more affecting to the heart, than this horrid spectacle. Still the superstitious foe were stimulated by some hoary priest with hopes of victory, while they imbrued their hands in the blood of their children, their parents, and their friends. Our shells found their way to their very cells, tearing babes from their mothers' bosoms, and dealing death and destruction around. *Oh! what must be the anguish of a fond mother, to see nothing but the head of her fondling hanging to her bosom!* I will relate one melancholy case of this kind, out of numbers that came within my observation, and actually happened at this place:—

"A female was lying on a bed of green silk, under her head was a pillow of the same material; her right arm had, no doubt, cradled her babe, and her left was extended, as though for the purpose of keeping her child close to her. A large shell had perforated the tiled roof, and having made its way through three floors, had gone through the foot of the bed, and penetrated some depth into the fourth floor. A piece of this shell had gone through the woman's forehead, carrying away a great part of her head, so that her death, according to the opinion of a medical man who saw her, must have been instantaneous. *The lower part of the child's body, from the hips downwards, was entirely*

gone; but, strange to say, its mother's nipple still hung in the left corner of its mouth, and its little right hand still held by its mother's, which, probably, it had grasped at the first noise of the shell. We understood that this woman was the wife of a most respectable officer in the fort, who had met his death some hours before her, and was, therefore, in pity, spared the afflicting sight. *Such, reader, are the scenes of war. Such are the scenes which soldiers in the course of service are called upon to witness.* The poor woman and her babe were committed to the grave; probably the first of her generation that ever returned to the earth as her last home, for she was a Hindoo woman.

"Near a small village, a beautiful young woman, about sixteen, had been seen, and ultimately seized. Her husband, to whom she had been wedded only about three months, was one of those who were killed when the magazine blew up. From that period, nothing could soothe her or appease her grief; no power could restrain her; and at last she escaped into an adjoining wood or rumna. When I saw her she was running wildly; but at times she would pause, hold up her finger, and tell you to listen, when she would exclaim, with the most heart-rending shriek,—'That was him! It was he that did speak!—Yet now he is gone!' Then the poor bewildered maniac would tear her coal-black hair, which was hanging in ringlets down her back and bosom, and at length sink exhausted to the ground. She was taken to the camp, and committed to the care of some of her relations who had been taken prisoners.

"How it was possible that a single individual could have escaped such a bombardment was to us a mystery: for large houses were literally torn up by the roots. They had thrown a great number of their dead into a well, and many lay in the ditch, a melancholy and revolting sight, for the sun had swollen them to an enormous size.

"It seems that the moment any of their children were killed in houses remote from the well, they were thrown into the street. I counted five limbless babes in one street."—*Military Career of John Shipp*, vol. ii. p. 190.

"Long will the Sikhs have cause to remember the battle of Goojerat. The whole line of their flight was strewed with dead. We advanced into their camp over heaps of dead and dying. It wanted nothing more to show the gallant stand they had made. Everything was in confusion—tumbrils overturned, guns dismounted, wagons with their wheels off, oxen and camels rushing wildly about, wounded horses plunging in their agony, beds, blankets, boxes, ammunition, strewed about the ground in a perfect chaos; the wounded lying there groaning, some begging to be despatched, others praying for mercy, and some, with scowling looks of impotent rage, striving to cut down those who came near them, thereby insuring their own destruction; for but little quarter, I am ashamed to say, was given, and even those we managed to save from the vengeance of our men, were, I fear, killed afterwards. But, after all, it is a war of extermination. The most heart-rending sight of the day was one I witnessed in a tent I entered. There, on the ground, bleeding to death, lay a young mother; her leg had been carried off by a round shot, and the jagged stump protruded in a ghastly manner through the mangled flesh. She held a baby to her breast, and as she bent over it with maternal anxiety, all her thoughts seemed to be of her child. She appeared totally regardless of the agony she must have been suffering, and to think of nothing but the poor infant, which

was drawing its nourishment from her failing breast. I gave her some water, and she drank it greedily, raising her large imploring eyes to my face, with an expression that was heart-rending to witness. I was obliged to leave the poor creature, and go on with the regiment, but the remembrance of that sight will live with me till my dying day."—*Extract from the Journal of a Subaltern of the 2nd Europeans, in the Battle of Goojerat.* (*From the "Times."*)

NOTE 27, page 117.

And the lover is slain, and the parents are nigh.

"We have the assurance of Marshal Suchet, that the officers of his army made tremendous exertions to stop the carnage. But the soldiers, with hands already steeped in blood, would not be restrained. Within and without the town the slaughter continued with unabated ferocity. The claims of age and sex were disregarded. Those who sought refuge in the churches were massacred even at the altar. *Beauty, helplessness, and innocence, did not save life, though they insured violation.*"—*Peninsular War*, vol. iii. p. 131.

"This successful achievement was followed by the usual scenes of riot and excess. The men, no longer amenable to discipline, ransacked the houses in search of plunder. The cellars were broken open, and emptied of their contents; many houses were wantonly set on fire; and the yells of brutal triumph, uttered by the *intoxicated soldiers*, were heard in wild dissonance with the screams of the wounded.' Thus passed the night. In the morning, by the exertions of the officers, discipline was partially restored. The soldiers by degrees returned to their duty, and the blind appetites of their brutal natures became again subjected to moral restraint"—Vol. iii. page 188.

"As soon as the fighting (at St. Sebastian's, in Spain) began to wax faint, the horrors of rapine and plunder succeeded. Fortunately there were few females in the place; but of the fate of the few which were there, I cannot even think without a shudder. The houses were everywhere ransacked, the furniture wantonly broken, the churches profaned, the images dashed to pieces; wine and spirit cellars were broken open, and the troops, heated already with angry passions, became absolutely mad by intoxication. All order and discipline were abandoned. The officers no longer had the slightest control over their men, who, on the contrary, controlled the officers; nor is it by any means certain that several of the latter did not fall by the hands of the former, when they vainly attempted to bring them to a sense of submission.

"Night had now set in, but the darkness was effectually dispelled by the glare of burning houses, which one after another took fire. The morning of the 31st had risen upon St. Sebastian, as neat and regularly built a town as any in Spain—long before midnight it was one sheet of flame: and by noon, on the following day, little remained of it excepting its smoking ashes. The houses being lofty, like those in the Old Town of Edinburgh, and the streets straight and narrow, the fire flew from one to another with extraordinary rapidity. At first, some attempts were made to extinguish it, but these soon proved useless, and then the only matter to be considered was how, personally, to escape its violence. Many a migration was accordingly effected from house to house, till at last, houses enough to shelter all could no

longer be found, and the streets became the place of rest to the majority.

"The spectacle which these presented was truly shocking. A strong light falling on them, from the burning houses, disclosed crowds of dead, dying, and intoxicated men, huddling indiscriminately together. Carpets, rich tapestry, beds, curtains, wearing apparel, and everything valuable to persons in common life, were carelessly scattered about upon the bloody pavement, whilst ever and anon fresh bundles of these were thrown from the windows above. Here you would see a drunken fellow whirling a string of watches round his head, and then dashing them against the wall; there another, more provident, stuffing his bosom with such smaller articles as he most prized. Next would come a party rolling a cask of wine, or spirits, with loud acclamations, which in an instant was tapped, and in an incredibly short space of time emptied of its contents. Then the ceaseless hum of conversation, the occasional laugh, and wild shout of intoxication, the pitiable cries, or deep moans of the wounded, and the uninterrnitted roar of the flames, produced altogether such a concert as no man who listened to it can ever forget.

"After these various noises, the greater number began gradually to subside, as night passed on—and long before dawn there was a fearful silence. Sleep had succeeded inebriety with the bulk of the army—of the poor wretches who groaned and shrieked three hours ago, many had expired; and the very fire had almost consumed itself, by consuming everything upon which it could feed. Nothing, therefore, could now be heard, except an occasional faint moan, scarcely distinguishable from the heavy breathings of the sleepers, and even that was soon heard no more."

NOTE 28, page 119.

The American War.

NOTE 29, page 119.

The French War.

NOTE 30, page 119.

Napoleon.

NOTE 31, page 119.

The Duke of Wellington, or existing Military Toryism.

NOTE 32, page 120.

The Glorious Three Days.

NOTE 33, page 125.

The groundwork of this story is in D'Herbelot, and other Eastern authorities. Lokman has been called the Arabian Æsop; and sometimes thought to ave been Æsop himself.

NOTE 34, page 132.

For the subject of this story I am indebted to a note in the Introduction to the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.*

NOTE 35, page 133.

See passages of it in Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances*, vol. iii. The whole of the original is to be found in a Scottish volume, the title of which I forget.

NOTE 36, page 139.

Of his uncle's ancestors, to wit, in the hall.

NOTE 37, page 153.

The story of *Death and the Ruffians*, is the tale told by the "Pardoner," who was an officer of the Papal church for the sale of pardons and indulgences; one of the set of men whose enormities precipitated the Reformation. The Pardoner tells this admirable story in the tone of a good man, though he has prefaced it (in the original) with an impudent confession of his knavery.

NOTE 38, page 159.

This, in the original, is the story that Milton so admired.

> Call up him that left half told
> The story of Cambuscan bold
> Of Camball and of Algarsife.
> And who had Canace to wife,
> That own'd the virtuous ring and glass;
> And of the wonderous horse of brass,
> On which the Tartar king did ride.

It is strange that Milton should have pronounced the word *Cambuscan;* nor is it pleasant, when his robust line must be resounding in the ear of every one to whom the story is called to mind, to be forced to obey even the greater dictation of the original, and throw the accent, as undoubtedly it ought to be thrown, on the first and last syllable. On no theory, as respects Chaucer's versification, does it appear intelligible how Milton could have thrown the accent on the second syllable, when the other reading stares us in the face throughout Chaucer's poem.

NOTE 39, page 160.

This commencement of a fresh paragraph with the second line of a couplet, a beauty noticed in our prefatory observations, is retained, together with the couplet itself, from the original.

NOTE 40, page 161.

The great Chinese Emperor of the Tartar dynasty.

NOTE 41, page 164.

Rather, I presume, the iron (an aerolite) of which the chain was made.

NOTE 42, page 165.

This is the Centaur in the "Tale of Troy," as told by the middle ages. The "chief" was Achilles.

NOTE 43, page 165.

The lighthouse at Alexandria, supposed, in the East, to be the work (thus fabulized) of Alexander the Great.

NOTE 44, page 166.

In making these additions to the original, the author had an eye to that continuation of the story, which he has mentioned.

NOTE 45, page 170.

It is hoped that this quadruple rhyme, the first ever ventured in the heroic measure, will be pardoned under the "go" of the circumstances.

NOTE 46, page 171.

The *Romance of Travel* is one of the many estimable publications originated by Mr. Charles Knight. It should be added, that the two volumes of which it consists concern only the eastern portion of the world. Is it too late to hope that the northern, southern, and western portions may yet proceed from the same pen?

NOTE 47, page 173.

Gesta, deeds, exploits.

NOTE 48, page 173.

The word anciently used for *elders* of any importance.

NOTE 49, page 177.

Whilere—erewhile—not long since.

NOTE 50, page 177.

The *Malagigi* of the Italians; cousin of the Paladin Rinaldo.

NOTE 51, page 178.

Adawe—daunt, affect with awe.

NOTE 52, page 178.

Theàtre—the true etymological pronunciation of the word, derived from the Latin *Theàtrum;* though it varied in the course of Spencer's own time. Examples are to be found in him of both the accents.

NOTE 53, page 178.

Sib—relation, kinsman.

NOTE 54, page 179.

Avisement—information, act of making aware.

NOTE 55, page 179

Whisht—hushed.

NOTE 56, page 179.

Congee—taking leave.

NOTE 57, page 180.

Pill'd—peeled or plundered.

NOTE 58, page 180.

Bann'd—cursed loudly, execrated.

NOTE 59, page 182.

Jape—mouth making.

NOTE 60, page 182.

May—maiden.

NOTE 61, page 183.

The bull of Phalaris, in which men were burned to death.

NOTE 62, page 183.

Als—else.

NOTE 63, page 184.

An account of this appalling damsel is to be found in Keightley's *Fairy Mythology.*

NOTE 64, page 185.

Gleeking—mockery.

NOTE 65, page 187.

Solon.

NOTE 66, page 188.

"Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother," as Ben Jonson wrote afterwards in his famous epitaph.

NOTE 67, page 190.

The Red Book. The reader will bear in mind, that these verses were written at the commencement of the Regency, which irritated Reformers by its violation of Whig promises and its retention of Tory ministers.

NOTE 68, page 191.

To wit, backbites me. The Goblin is the Attorney-General;—at that time Sir Vicary Gibbs; who resembled in aspect the portrait here drawn of him in his wig and gown. He was much esteemed, I believe, in private, and was a great reader of novels.

NOTE 69, page 191.

Alluding to three out of the four prosecutions instituted by the then Tory government against the author's (and his brother John's) news-

paper, the *Examiner*, for expressing opinions which, in those days, were called libels, and with all of which later times have accorded. The fourth prosecution, which took place subsequently to the publication of this poem, was the only one that succeeded; but according to the strange ordinances in such cases, the proprietors of the paper had to pay the expenses of indictments in all.

NOTE 70, page 191.

Torquato Tasso.

NOTE 71, page 191.

The secret of Tasso's confinement by his sovereign, the Duke of Ferrara, has never yet been satisfactorily ascertained. The poet used to fancy that things were stolen from him by spirits.

NOTE 72, page 193.

Thelwall was a lecturer on elocution, with whom Reformers were angry for his having given up politics.

NOTE 73, page 194.

This is the date of its first appearance; but the poem subsequently underwent a succession of alterations, arising from changes in the author's critical opinions. Additional guests also appeared at Apollo's table. The chief altered passages are now given in the notes, as they originally stood, for reasons which are there intimated; and circumstances of chronology and association, by the help of a postscript, have induced, in the present final state of the poem, the restriction of the number of feasters to just limits of contemporaneousness.

NOTE 74, page 194.

Like those written by Sir John Suckling, the Duke of Buckingham, and others.

NOTE 75, page 196.

Editor of the then *Quarterly Review*, which, besides the Reformers, abused Charles Lamb, and subsequently Shelley and Keats. He is called, a few lines further, the Anti-La-Cruscan, from his having given, or been supposed to give, the *coup-de-grace* to a set of fantastical versifiers, who were headed by one that wrote under the signature of Della Crusca, and who would have died of inanition with their master, whether Gifford—himself a very small poet—had attacked them, or not. The reader can see more on the subject, if he pleases, in my "Autobiography." What had exasperated me with Gifford, before his attacks on my friends, was his unmanly treatment of George the Fourth's (then Prince of Wales's) discarded and now infirm mistress, Mary Robinson, whose "crutches" he did not hesitate to make subjects of derision. Not a syllable did he dare to breathe against the Prince.

NOTE 76, page 197.

When the "Feast of the Poets" was first published, the passage introducing Sir Walter (then Mr.) Scott, stood as follows. The reader will be good enough to bear in mind that he had not then written his

novels, and that he had exasperated Reformers with his excessive Toryism.

> " Next came Walter Scott with a look of high meaning;
> For soon as his visage the tavern was seen in,
> The diners and barmaids all crowded to know him,
> And thank him with smiles for ' that sweet pretty poem.'
> However, the moment his senses he found,
> He look'd adoration, and bow'd to the ground;
> For his host was a God—what a very great thing!
> And what was still greater in *his* eyes—a king!

(Ανας Απολλων,—King Apollo—a common title of the god with the Grecian poets)

> Apollo smiled shrewdly, and bade him sit down,
> With, " Well, Mr. Scott, you have managed the town;
> Now, pray copy less; have a little temerity:
> Try if you can't also manage posterity:
> All you add now only lessens your credit.
> And how could you think, too, of taking to edit?
> A great deal's endured where there's measure and rhyme,
> But prose such as yours is a pure waste of time—
> A singer of ballads, subdued by a cough,
> Who fairly talks on till his hearers walk off."

More was said respecting his want of originality; he was accused of wanting independence of mind; and the following note (with its italics) was appended to the passage:—

" Of Mr. Walter Scott's innate and trusting reverence for thrones and dominations, the reader may find specimens abundantly nauseous in the edition of Dryden, where he will also be let into the whole art and mystery of his bookmaking, including a life, or biographical compilation run to seed, idle or redundant notes of all descriptions, and extracts from every possible work which he had an opportunity of quoting. His style in prose, setting aside its Scotticisms, is very well where he affects nothing beyond a plain statement, or a brief piece of criticism; and it is not to be supposed that his critical observations are always destitute of acuteness, or even of beauty; but the moment that he attempts anything of particular ease or profundity, he only becomes slovenly in the one instance, and poetically pedantic in the other. His politics may be estimated at once by the simple fact, that of all the advocates of Charles the Second, he is the least scrupulous in mentioning his crimes, *because he is the least abashed.* Other writers have paid decency the compliment of doubting their extent, or of keeping them in the background; but here we have the plainest, tooth-picking acknowledgments, that Charles was a pensioner of France, a shameless debanchee, and an assassinating master, and yet all the while he is nothing but the ' gay monarch,' the ' merry monarch,' the ' witty monarch,' the ' good-natured monarch;' and Mr. Scott really appears to think little or nothing of all that he says against him. On the other hand, let a villain be but a Whig, or let any unfortunate person, with singular southern notions of independence, be but an opposer of Charles's court, and he is sure to meet with a full and crying denunciation of his offence, with raised hands and lifted eyeballs: nothing can be

meaner than his politics, nothing grosser than his indecency, nothing more cold-blooded than his revenge. The execution of Charles the First, Mr. Scott calls an enormity unequalled in modern history, till the present age furnished a parallel—massacres, of course, and other trifles of that sort, particularly when kings and courtiers are the actors, fade before it; and princely villains like Henry the Eighth, Ezzelino, and Borgia, are respectable and conscientious men by the side of the President Bradshaw and his colleagues. At the same time, a king, who by the basest means, and for the slightest cause, would assassinate a faithful servant in the very act of performing his duty, is only ungenerous—one of whom the said servant has no small reason to complain. The reader may think this representation exaggerated, but let the author speak for himself, and blush if he can at repeating his wretched words. 'His political principles (the Earl of Mulgrave's) were those of a staunch Tory, which he maintained through his whole life; and he was zealous for the royal prerogative, although he had *no small reason to complain* of Charles the Second, who, to avenge himself of Mulgrave for a supposed attachment to the Princess Anne, sent him to Tangiers, at the head of some troops, *in a leaky vessel, which it was supposed must have perished in the voyage.* Though Mulgrave was apprised of the danger, he scorned to shun it; and the Earl of Plymouth, a favourite son of the king, generously insisted upon sharing it along with him. This ungenerous attempt to destroy him in the very act of performing his duty, with the refusal of a regiment, made a temporary change in Mulgrave's conduct.'"—Notes on "Absalom and Achitophel" in Dryden's Works, vol. ix. p. 304.

These verses and remarks on Walter Scott were written in the year 1811. I now write in the year 1859.

I confess I do not believe, nor can very well see how anybody, friend or foe, could be brought to believe in this alleged attempt at murder on the part of Charles the Second. Its very statement, I think, especially in connexion with the "favourite son," refutes it. Young gentlemen about town, whatever their bravery, loyalty, or good-fellowship, cannot be considered so ready to take voyages in ships which it is supposed must perish; and Charles, pensioner as he was of France, and selfish but not ill-natured sensualist, must have been a monster out of the pale of nature to be willing to sacrifice a son to such a purpose. Yet Sir Walter appears to have given the story credit—a thing surely of equal incredibility, and only to be accounted for by a moment of excessive want of thought. For in whatsoever party bigotry he may have been trained, and however he may have exhibited it to the last in spite of his better genius, he was a good and kind man, misled in such matters by his very affections; and anything short of such a conclusion is inconceivable.

With regard to his poetical powers, it is now pretty generally conceded, that they will bear no comparison with those evinced in his novels; and no particular merit is claimed, I believe, for his powers of criticism; at all events as far as poetry is concerned. I have long, nevertheless, been ashamed of the youthful petulance and presumption which led me to assume a tone of superiority in speaking of either. His novels I have ever held, with all the world, to be new, admirable, and great; and though I believe, nay hope, on account of their own affections, that my attack on him was the main cause of all which I afterwards, and otherwise most unjustly, experienced at the hands of his

Tory associates, I was not hindered from ultimately merging the idea of him as a partisan into that of a great sympathizing human being, and I became one of the warmest of his public admirers, and shed tears at his death.

NOTE 77, page 197.

In the first edition of this poem, Wordsworth and Coleridge were treated in the following contemptuous manner. The contempt, the assumption of a tone of scornful intellectual superiority, was as wrong as it was in the attack upon Walter Scott; and I am sorry for it; though at the same time it is to be observed, that sound objection existed to Wordsworth's experiments in excessive homeliness of style and subject, as Coleridge himself (in a truly friendly notice nevertheless, indeed the more friendly on that account) has shown in his autobiographical "Literary Life," which contains, by the way—so at least it appears to me—the most masterly criticism on poetry in the language. I must add, that I knew little at the time of the writings either of Coleridge or Wordsworth, except from extracts in hostile reviews. When I came to read them better for myself, I went to such an extreme the other way, that in subsequent editions of the "Feast of the Poets," Wordsworth was extolled as the "Prince of the bards of his time;" a distinction which I finally could not help thinking, as I still think, belonged properly to Coleridge.

A noise is heard on the staircase made as if by persons giving themselves airs of great consequence. It turns out to have been made by Southey and the rest of what were called the Lake poets, from their being supposed to be all living among the lakes in the north of England, and to have poetical characteristics in common; neither of which suppositions was well founded. As soon as he beheld Southey,

> "Apollo seem'd pleas'd
> But as he had settled it was not to be teaz'd
> By all the vain rhymers from bed-room and brook;
> He turn'd from the rest without even a look:
> For Coleridge had vexed him long since I suppose
> By his idling, and gabbling, and muddling in prose;
> And as to that Wordsworth, he'd been so benurst,
> Second childhood with him had come close on the first.
> These worthies, however, long used to attack,
> Were not by contempt to be so driven back,
> But follow'd the God up, and shifting their place,
> Stood full in his presence, and look'd in his face;
> When one began spouting the cream of orations
> In praise of bombarding one's friends and relations,

(Coleridge's defence of the attack on Copenhagen;)

> And t'other some lines he had made on a straw,
> Showing how he had found it, and what it was for,
> And how when 'twas balanced, it stood like a spell,
> And how when 'twas balanced no longer, it fell!
> A wild thing of scorn he described it to be.
> But said it was patient to heaven's decree:
> Then he gazed upon nothing, and looking forlorn,
> Dropp'd a natural tear for that wild thing of scorn!

" Apollo half-laughed betwixt anger and mirth,
And cried, ' Were there ever such asses on earth?
It is not enough that this nonsense, I fear,
Has half turn'd the fine head of my friend Robert here,
But another bright promise must fairly be lost,
And the gifts of a God by this madman be cross'd.
What! think ye a bard's a mere gossip who tells
Of the ev'ry-day feelings of ev'ryone else,
And that poetry lies, not in something select,
But in gathering the refuse that others reject?
Depart and be modest, ye driv'llers of pen;
My feasts are for masculine tastes, and for men.'

" Then turning to Bob, he said. ' Sit down, I beg;'
But Billy grew sulky, and stirr'd not a peg;
While Sam, looking soft, and politely dejected,
Confess'd with a tear that ' 'Twas what he expected,
Since Phœbus had fatally learnt to confide in,
Such prosers as Johnson and rhymers as Dryden.'
" But wrath seiz'd Apollo, &c."

Here followed the passage that still succeeds those words in the poem, though applied to a very different set of persons; and it was added, as a consequence of the wrath, that Wordsworth could

" Scarcely yet manage to speak,
And Coleridge, they say, is excessively weak;
Indeed he has fits of the painfullest kind:
He stares at himself and his friends, till he's blind;
Then describes his own legs, and claps each a long stilt on,
And this he calls *lect'ring* on ' Shakespeare and Milton.' "

The lectures alluded to, though not wanting in masterly passages, had been counted failures upon the whole; and the only one which I heard (the first, I think) had been singularly such, being little more than the promise of a better next time. The poet, with his usual dilatoriness, had either not properly prepared himself, or trusted too much to his admirable extemporaneous powers, which may have been daunted by his having to address an audience not entirely presenting familiar faces.

NOTE 78, page 197.

I mean, that it is a pure emanation of imaginative and musical feeling, without helps of accumulations of thoughts, of images added for the sake of display, or of anything that would do as well in prose, or is not thoroughly pertinent to the subject. I speak, of course, only of his finest productions, such as the " Ancient Mariner," " Genevieve," " Youth and Age," &c. In his younger days he wrote much that was singularly common-place for one who turned out to be so real a poet.

NOTE 79, page 198.

Ireland, a would-be Chatterton, was author of a play which he pretended to be Shakspeare's. The late Mr. Croker was the person originally introduced here, as the possessor of " face " *par excellence;*

nor were his claims to it, in the abstract, to be questioned ; but as far as the author could discover, Croker had written no verses.

My friend, the editor of the Boston edition of my Poems in America, has expressed a regret that there is an omission here of the following couplet on Peter Pindar (Dr. Walcott.)

> " And old Peter Pindar turn'd pale and suppress'd,
> With a death-bed sensation, a blasphemous jest."

But, on reflection, I thought I had been unjust to Peter, not being able to call to mind among his vagaries anything deserving the name of blasphemy. Blasphemy, in its usual restricted sense, means evil speaking of the Divinity ; and it is in far graver works than Peter's that specimens of this enormity are to be looked for. See the verses in this volume, entitled " Question for Question."

NOTE 80, page 199.

When Trefoil becomes Quatrefoil, that is to say, is found with four petals instead of three (a very rare occurrence), it is said to gift the finder with magic power.

NOTE 81, page 199.

See, towards the conclusion, the translation of Redi's " Bacchus in Tuscany " in this volume.

NOTE 82, page 200.

John Hookham Frere, author of the masterly translation from the Spanish at the end of Southey's " Chronicle of the Cid."

NOTE 83, page 200.

William Stuart Rose, whose translation of Ariosto is an advance upon Hoole, and his abridgement of Casti's " Animali Parlanti " something better ; but in neither case has he supplied a desideratum. His language is too generally forced and artificial. He had perceptions nevertheless, both serious and comic, that should have led him to put better trust in their impulse ; and his " Letters from the North of Italy " are as full of good sense as entertainment.

NOTE 84, page 200.

The famous comet of 1811, which had lately then made its appearance.

NOTE 85, page 201.

Landor had written poetry long before, but not dramatic poetry ; nor had he been publicly recognised as a poet at all, till the time of these, his juniors. I mention the place in which Shelley wrote the " Cenci," both to intimate the scene and story of the play, and because it always appeared to me that the style of it partook of the majesty we attach to the idea of the great city.

NOTE 86, page 202.

The " Feast of the Poets."

NOTE 87, page 205.

Dr. Southwood Smith.

NOTE 88, page 205.

It hardly need be observed that the word "Genius," here used in its mythological sense, does not, of *necessity*, imply that higher order of faculty, which gifts the possessors with something peculiar to them, and leaves a gap when they are gone. And as little does it imply equality of faculty. The difference of degree, in this respect, among the ladies ensuing, is as great, as specification of it would be ungallant. All the criticisms which follow relate to the individuals themselves only, and insinuate no comparison with others, whether of preference or the reverse.

I take this opportunity of adding, that for obvious reasons no mention is made of anonymous writers.

NOTE 89, page 207.

Authoress of the tragedy founded on early Christian history entitled "Vivia Perpetua."

NOTE 90, page 208.

Authoress of "Traits of Nature," "Country Neighbours," &c. A niece of Madame d'Arblay.

NOTE 91, page 208.

Miss Cullen, authoress of "Home," &c., a descendant, if I mistake not, of the great and good Scottish physician.

NOTE 92, page 208.

See translations of sonnets from Petrarch in Ugo Foscolo's masterly Essays on that poet, particularly the one about the pilgrim. Lady Dacre is celebrated for her powers in sculpture, especially in animals. A horse after a model of hers, full of grace and fire, is well known in the plaster-cast shops. The names which follow in the text are those of reigning female artists and amateurs.

NOTE 93, page 212.

The following is the passage alluded to. It is from one of the lady's novels, but I cannot remember which, having made the extract some time ago, without adding the reference. As it is a female who speaks, the caution is given with respect to men only; but it need not be added, that it equally applies to the love professed by man or woman:—

"We are too apt to think only how WE are treated; too little accustomed to observe what is the treatment of OTHERS by the same person. Watch and weigh. If a man speak evil of his friends to you, he will also speak evil of you to his friends. Kind and caressing words are easily spoken, and pleasant to hear; but the man who bears a kind heart, bears it to all, and not to one only. He who appears to love only the friend he speaks to, and slanders or speaks coldly of the rest, loves no one but himself."

Every one of these sentences is a jewel.

NOTE 94, page 212.

Mrs. Opie's Tales ("Simple Tales," "Tales of Real Life," &c.) and her admirable novel, "Temper," are all printed in good, comfortable-sized, portable volumes, not too big for the pocket, yet with a largish type; so that, in every respect, they may literally be said to furnish some of the easiest reading in the language.

NOTE 95, page 212.

Authoress of the "Children of the Abbey."

NOTE 96, page 212.

"Frankenstein."

NOTE 97, page 213.

See a charming stanza in Ariosto, a picture by itself, in which he describes this adventure,—a fiction, I believe of his own. (*Orlando Furioso.* Canto xv. st. 57.) A collection of additions to ancient mythology by modern poets, Ariosto, Spenser, and others, would make a delightful book.

NOTE 98, page 213.

I find this word, accompanied by a due relish of it in some papers on Dancing, in the *New Monthly Magazine* (see the number for May, 1836.) There is no language like the Italian for a happy magniloquence between jest and earnest. What a word is this *pavoneggiàndosi* for expressing the stately flow of an imitation of the peacock, with that lift too and sudden movement in the midst of it, marked by the accent! But I must not be tempted into these luxuries of annotation.

NOTE 99, page 214.

Alluding to the accounts of the mausoleum in particular, built by one of the Mogul emperors for his mistress, the walls of which were of marble, flowered, as here described, with jewelry.

NOTE 100, page 215.

See a curious speculation in Tucker's "Light of Nature Pursued," in which a guess is made at the mode of speech in a future state.

NOTE 101, page 215.

Frances Brooke, authoress of "Rosina," "Emily Montague," &c. &c., "as remarkable," says Gorton's Biographical Dictionary, "for the suavity and gentleness of her manners, as for her literary talents." She had the candour, in a dispute with Garrick, to confess publicly that she was in the wrong.

NOTE 102, page 215.

Anne, Countess of Winchelsea, in the time of Pope, whom she knew. Gay introduces her among Pope's welcomers home from Greece (his finish of the Iliad) as

—"Winchelsea, still meditating song."

Her poems, amidst a good deal of inferior matter, contain evidences of a true feeling for nature, which has obtained the praise of Wordsworth. "It is remarkable," says he, in the Essay in his Miscellaneous Poems, "that excepting a passage or two in the 'Windsor Forest,' of Pope, and some delightful pictures in the Poems of Lady Winchelsea, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the 'Paradise Lost,' and the 'Seasons,' does not contain a single new image of external nature." In Mr. Dyce's "Specimens of British Poetesses," are to be found two of her best specimens, the "Nocturnal Reverie," and the truly philosophical and fine-hearted effusion entitled the "Spleen;" but I am surprised that he has omitted her "Petition for an Absolute Retreat," a charming aspiration after one of those sequestered states of felicity which poets love to paint. It is equally beautiful for its thoughts, its pictures, and the music of the burthen which it repeats at the close of each paragraph.

NOTE 103, page 215.

Lady Ann Barnard, of the house of Balcarres, authoress of "Auld Robin Grey,"—the most beautiful ballad that ever was written.

NOTE 104, page 216.

Sulpicia; respecting whom, after all, there is much dispute.

NOTE 105, page 216.

Vittoria Colonna, the chief Italian poetess, famous for her adoring constancy to the memory of her husband, the Marquis of Pescara, a distinguished soldier.

NOTE 106, page 216.

Gaspara Stampa, another celebrated Italian poetess, whose writings are full of the passion she entertained, not with a like return, for Collaltino di Collalto, Conte di Trevigi, an eminent soldier. It has been generally supposed that she died of her love; but she did a much wiser thing,—transferred it to a more loving person.

NOTE 107, page 216.

Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre, sister of Francis the First, and grandmother of Henry the Fourth—authoress of the set of tales called "The Heptameron."

NOTE 108, page 216.

Louise Charly, generally called Louisa Labe, or *La Belle Cordière*, wife of a rope-maker at Lyons, celebrated for her numerous accomplishments; which included Greek and Latin, as well as wit and the guitar.

NOTE 109, page 216.

Madame de Staal, an attendant on the Duchess du Maine in the time of the Regency, here called by her maiden name of De Launay (which she bore almost all her life) to distinguish her from Madame de *Staël*. Her autobiography is perhaps unique for candour and self-knowledge.

NOTE 110, page 216.

Which charmed Rousseau with their expression, in spite of the small-pox, and their own not very great beauty in other respects. But every one's mind, such as it is, looks out through the eyes,—those windows of the habitation of the soul; and Rousseau thought he discovered in hers the natural affectionate woman, in the midst of a selfish and artificial generation. It was this Madame d'Houdetot who, in the decline of life, wrote the touching verses on love, beginning "Jeune j'aimai."

NOTE 111, page 216.

Wife of an Italian actor in Paris, and authoress of numerous popular novels, remarkable for their good-hearted liberality of sentiment. She was a friend and correspondent of Garrick. She is said to have died in a state approaching to want.

NOTE 112, page 216.

Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, in the time of Cromwell and Charles the Second. With an ill-regulated judgment, and fantastic notions of her dignity, personal and conventional, she possessed real genius and knowledge, and great consideration for others. She was one of those people who seem to have had a fool for one parent and a sage for the other.

NOTE 113, page 216.

Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, sister of the late Earl Spencer, and mother of the late Duke, who so well sustained the reputation of the ever liberal and graceful house of Cavendish. See, in Mr. Dyce's collection above noticed, the Duchess's "Ode on the Passage of Mount Saint Gothard," which excited the enthusiasm of Coleridge—

> "O lady, nurs'd in pomp and pleasure,
> Where gat you that heroic measure?"

NOTE 114, page 216.

Jane Elliot, authoress of the exquisite lament for the battle of Flodden, called the "Flowers of the Forest," which Sir Walter Scott had such difficulty in believing a modern production. It is like the sullenness of a still morning in the country, before rain.

NOTE 115, page 217.

See in Aikin's "Miscellanies" her admirable essay upon "Inconsistency in our Expectations;" and in Mr. Dyce's collection, "A Summer Evening's Meditation," containing, among other beauties, the following sublime passage:

> "This dead of midnight is *the noon of thought*,
> *And wisdom mounts her zenith with the stars*."

NOTE 116, page 217.

See it vindicated in a manner at once the most pleasant and affecting in that beautiful book, the "Pentameron," of Mr. Landor.

NOTE 117, page 219.

Sir John Suckling, the most genuine poet of his class, stood midway between the sentiment of the first Charles's time and the carelessgallantry of the second. His "Ballad on a Wedding," is as fresh as a painting done yesterday; and will remain so, as long as animal spirits and a taste for nature exist. He is the inventor of "Sessions of the Poets." It is recorded of him, that he once gave a supper to the ladies of his acquaintance, at which, upon the covers being removed, one of the courses turned out to consist of haberdashery and other such amenities, doubtless of a taste and costliness proportioned to the spirit of the entertainer.

NOTE 118, page 220.

The appellation of "Blue-Stockings" is understood to have originated, as here described, in the dress of the excellent old Benjamin Stillingfleet (grandson of the Bishop) as he used to appear at the parties of Mrs. Montagu, in Portman-square. He was jilted by a mistress to whose remembrance he remained faithful; and in spite of a disappointment which he thus deeply felt, remained to the last one of the most amiable of men and entertaining of companions. See his "Literary Life and Select Works," published by Longman in the year 1811. "Mr. Stillingfleet," (says a passage quoted in it from Bisset's Life of Burke) "almost always wore blue worsted stockings, and whenever he was absent from Mrs. Montagu's evening parties, as his conversation was very entertaining, the company used to say, 'We can do nothing without the *blue-stockings*,' and by degrees the assemblies were called *Blue-stocking* Clubs, and learned bodies *Blue* Stockings."—Vol. i. p. 237.

NOTE 119, page 221.

The word "gentle" is here to be understood in its fine old sense as implying, in the inner nature, all which gentle manners ought to imply, and which, when really gentle, they do. Such is the meaning of the word in Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare; in Wordsworth's

"Gentle lady married to the Moor:"

and in the "cor gentile" and "Donna gentil," of the Italians.

NOTE 120, page 222.

From the *Examiner* of March 20, 1814.

NOTE 121, page 225.

But from a revised and augmented copy, superseding the first imperfect sketch, and never before published.

NOTE 122, page 225.

His Majesty's Chancellor Lord Eldon, whom in his elegant familiarity he was wont to call "Old Bags." *Sherry-derry* is his famous friend Sheridan, who was an Irishman.

NOTE 123, page 226.

When the Regalia on Coronation Day are brought into Westminster Hall, and laid before his Majesty on a table, his viewing of them is called "the toying."

NOTE 124, page 227.

It is too true that his Majesty walked from the Hall to the Abbey through a mixture of applauses and hisses. It was the same afterwards on his return.

NOTE 125, page 227.

The chair in Westminster Abbey in which all the Sovereigns of England have been crowned, from the time of Edward the First.

NOTE 126, page 227.

We learn from themselves, that during his talk over the bottle among friends, the Duke of Wellington not excepted, his Majesty was not slow to intimate, that in his own discernment, as the sovereign arbiter of affairs, lay the chief secret of the downfall of Bonaparte.

NOTE 127, page 228.

By " devilry," it is presumed that his Majesty meant nothing more (or less) diabolical, than devilled kidneys and biscuits.

NOTE 128, page 228.

His Majesty's Champion.

NOTE 129, page 228.

Vivo—a dative instead of accusative case. But these are small slips over a bottle.

NOTE 130, page 235.

This sonnet was written at the same time and in the same place, (the Vale of Health, Hampstead,) with the sonnets on the Nile in the works of Shelley and Keats.

NOTE 131, page 235.

Written at the same place as the preceding sonnet, and in companionship with that of Keats on the same subject.

NOTE 132, page 238.

The author's aunt, Mrs. West (the artist's wife), very agreeably said —" The Duke of Bedford came in while my husband was painting Kosciusko's portrait. He stooped down upon the General's hand as he reclined on the sofa, and kissed it: *and I fell in love with him.*"—This was Francis, fifth Duke of Bedford, whose statue is in Russell Square.

NOTE 133, page 240.

Ion signifies a violet.

NOTE 134, page 257.

Pershore, query Pearshore, on the Avon ; so named perhaps from its abundance of pears.

NOTE 135, page 262.

His excellent sister.

NOTE 136, page 262.

During my imprisonment for anticipating the judgment of posterity respecting the Regent.

NOTE 137, page 263.

This epistle was written in the character of a descendant of Sir Thomas Browne.

NOTE 138, page 265.

Afterwards Chief Justice at Sydney and Gibraltar.

NOTE 139, page 267.

An infirmity in church and state matters, which this celebrated poet and excellent private gentleman certainly carried to an excess, that not unreasonably irritated persons of less versatile opinions, especially those who underwent his rebukes without ever having gone so far as himself.

NOTE 140, page 273.

Izaak Walton, who thus delighted to spell his name.

NOTE 141, page 275.

Linnæus.

NOTE 142, page 283.

The Waits.

NOTE 143, page 283.

The bellman.

NOTE 144, page 286.

As Burns speaks of ladies singing "Scottish songs like angels," there can be no harm in making them angelical in their dancing.

NOTE 145, page 287.

The muscles, to wit, called (in Anatomical Latin, and in the nominative case), *flexores*, or benders.

NOTE 146, page 287.

See his poem of advice to young Aiken.

NOTE 147, page 287.

Daisies; to wit, *Days-Eyes*; the real meaning of the word, and the original spelling.

NOTE 148, page 291.

Opium is chiefly made from the white poppy; but the red is the one so much better known, that the writer has here made it stand for the whole genus.

NOTE 149, page 300.

This sonnet was written in answer to the following one from the pen of my friend Mr. Thomas Wade, which is here inserted both in right of its allegation and of its poetry.

CALVUS.

Bald mortal! thou dost ape the skeleton
That satirises man, and all his doings,
From every open'd grave; and shouldst seem one,
But for the glow-worm which is in thine eyes,
And certain airs that from thy lips arise:
Why, now to see thee at thy amorous cooings,
Or gravely preaching immortality,
To which thy living death's-head gives the lie,
Would make the shadow that all life receiveth,
Shake his dim sides with horrible derision:
Tell us, old Calvus! what about thee cleaveth,
To make distinction still between the vision
Of a death's-head and thine? Get thee false hair
For thy sole privilege to upper air.

NOTE 150, page 305.

The late king of Prussia, who, when he came to England, was accompanied by his friend Alexander von Humboldt.

NOTE 151, page 306.

Edward-Albert.

NOTE 152, page 307

Wordsworth.

NOTE 153, page 309.

For the possibility of cramming long senses of duration within short spaces of time, see not only the story of the Sultan and the tub of water in the Arabian Nights, and the history of the Ephemeris in some paper (I think) by Addison, (fables founded in a deep philosophy,) but the cases of morbid experience in medical records. Be the experience what it may, human life has often been thought a dream; and who is to pronounce that it may not be as short a thing as it is described to be in "Dream *within* Dream," and something of the same kind?

NOTE 154, page 310.

Rapturous—transporting, carrying away. The reader can take the word either in its spiritual or material sense, or both; according as he agrees or disagrees with Keppler and others, respecting the nature of the planetary bodies.

NOTE 155, page 311.

Alluding to a central sun; that is to say, a sun governing other suns, which is supposed to exist in the constellation of Hercules.

NOTE 156, page 314.

The Lares, or ancient Gods of the hearth, had figures of dogs at their feet.

NOTE 157, page 315.

————————Mediocribus esse poetis
Non di, non homines, non concessere *columnæ*.—HOR.

For the strictly classical use of the word "fiddling" in this place, *vide* innumerable places in the ancient poets. Truly did Cicero observe, "Discebant fidibus antiqui;"—the ancients learnt the fiddle. Horace repeatedly mentions the one with which he accompanied his own verses.

NOTE 158, page 316.

A *jeu d'esprit* recorded of divers colonnades; among others, that which screened the late Carlton House. It may be thus translated:—

How came you here, good columns, pray?
'Faith, my good friend, we cannot say.

NOTE 159, page 317.

Colonne Ebraiche o Misteriose. Due colonne del vestibolo del tempio di Salomone; l'una delle quali, a destra, si chiamava *Jachin*, desiderio; e l'altra, a sinistra, *Booz*, forza e vigore, &c.—*Dizionario d' Ogni Mitologia*, tom. i. p. 468.

NOTE 160, page 331.

Of whom an image was made once a year, laid upon a couch, and served with baskets of flowers, confectionery, &c., as if it were alive.

Theocritus here shows us, that gossiping and sight-seeing are the same things in all countries and in all ages of the world. Women of the same class of society talk and act precisely as those do at the present moment, in every region of the globe.

NOTE 161, page 334.

The Syracusans, a colony from Corinth, spoke the Dorian dialect, which was full of a's.

NOTE 162, page 334.

An epithet of the favourite Sicilian deity, Proserpine, as that of "Adorable" was, which Gorgo uses before.

NOTE 163, page 341.

Tiresias, who was blind.

NOTE 164, page 341.

Sanchoniathon.

NOTE 165, page 342.

Whom Plato banished from his imaginary republic.

NOTE 166, page 345.

This traitor, whose hair the furious poet himself has been plucking off by handfulls because he would not disclose his name, barked at every pluck like a dog. The name was disclosed by a fellow-sufferer.

NOTE 167, page 345.

For giving him his death-wound at the siege of Thebes. But Menalippus's head had been cut off from his earthly body, and was insensible.

NOTE 168, page 346.

Pisan nobles, of the party opposed to that of Ugolino.

NOTE 169, page 347.

The Italian for *Yes*. The country is thus designated by the commonest word in its language; as in the case of the French Languedoc, or Language of *Oc*,—the old word in that quarter of France for the same affirmative.

NOTE 170, page 348.

Alluding to the cruelties practised in the royal house of Thebes.

NOTE 171, page 354.

One of the Saracen princes who came against Charlemagne.

NOTE 172, page 357.

The supposed author of a fabulous history of Charlemagne, to which the Italian narrative poets are always half-ironically referring as their authority.

NOTE 173, page 358.

The arms of France.

NOTE 174, page 359.

Agreeably to the popular notions of the time in which he wrote, Ariosto makes no distinction, as to appellation, between existing Mahometans and the Pagans of antiquity, and ascribes to the former a particular fancy for the worship of the Triple Goddess.

NOTE 175, page 359.

Zerbino, one of the allies of Charlemagne.

NOTE 176, page 360.

The eighteenth canto of the *Orlando Furioso* here terminates, and the nineteenth commences.

NOTE 177, page 361.

The omission of the final syllable in proper names, for the purpose of accommodating the metre, is so common a licence with the Italian

poets, that I have not scrupled to copy it. Ariosto uses it in the instance before us;—

Ma quando da *Medor* si vede assente,
Gli pare aver lasciato addietro il core.

NOTE 178, page 364.

The ring conferred the power of invisibility.

NOTE 179, page 365.

Another of the Peers or Paladins of Charlemagne, second only in renown to Orlando.

NOTE 180, page 367.

Sacripant was king of Circassia.

NOTE 181, page 368.

The courtship of Angelica by Agrican, King of Tartary, with a countless army behind him to enforce it, attracted the notice of Milton.

"Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican, with all his northern powers,
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrone, from whence to win
The fairest of her sex, Angelica."
Paradise Regained.

NOTE 182, page 368.

A banter on the most bantered of all subjects.

NOTE 183, page 369.

Casa was himself in orders, and subsequently a bishop.

NOTE 184, page 372.

This was the Cardinal Bibbiena aforesaid, who had been tutor to Leo X., and possessed great influence. He seems to have been fond of complimenting the disinterestedness of his friends by doing nothing for them. He was very intimate with Ariosto, and therefore did nothing for *him*; as the great poet himself has intimated in his *Satires*. Nay, when Leo issued his Bull, securing the property of the *Orlando Furioso* to its author, "Dear Bibbiena," says Ariosto, "expedited the matter for me—at my own expense."

"Il mio Bibbiena
Espedito mi ha il resto alle mie spese."
Vide the Satire addressed to his cousin Annibal Malegucci.

NOTE 185, page 373.

Berni introduced a fashion among the wits of writing on the most unpromising subjects, and showing how much could be made out of them. Among his themes were "Praises of being in Debt," "Of the Plague," &c.

NOTE 186, page 376.

He is called Maestro Pier, and Piero Buffetto in Berni's Miscellaneous Poems, and appears to have been well known. Our author, besides other pieces, addressed to him one in praise of Aristotle, in which he laments, that the great philosopher, among the other marvels of his genius, had not benefited mankind with a treatise on cookery.

"Oh Dio, che crudeltà! che non compose
Un operetta sopra la cucina
Tra l'infinite sue miracolose."

Good God! how cruel in him not to write
Some little work concerning cookery,
'Mongst all the wonders of his thoughtful might!

NOTE 187, page 376.

Such readers of Italian as possess Berni's *Orlando Innamorato*, may possibly observe, that in this last stanza I have departed a little from the original; blotches and spots in ceilings being things less difficult to conceive in the houses of modern European gentry than the beams and rafters of those in the time of the poet. I have modified a sentence or two in Ariosto for a different reason.

NOTE 188, page 405.

Sixteen-pence halfpenny, to wit; celebrated in two hundred sonnets by this scape-grace of a humorist, who pretends that he was persecuted for that sum by a remorseless creditor.

NOTE 189, page 417.

Artamenes, or the Grand Cyrus, written by Mademoiselle Scuderi. The books mentioned in this battle are either obsolete French works, or sorry productions of the author's contemporaries.

NOTE 190, page 419.

The large crucifix in processions.

NOTE 191, page 419.

"Infortiat (law, the second part of the digest) Infortiatum. Dufief's *French-English Dictionary*. Enforcement? It appears to have been the ecclesiastical portion of the General Body of Jurisprudence—*Canon* Law. If so, there is much wit in the recourse had by the Canon to this compulsory folio.

NOTE 192, page 422.

I have forgotten the name of the author from whom I translated this *jeu d'esprit*.

THE END.

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